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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

New York tiger owner: A man sentenced to five months in jail after pleading guilty to keeping a tiger and an alligator in his New York City apartment was released from jail, and says he would like to open his own zoo.

Antoine Yates, 36, said he was freed Thursday after serving about 3½ months as a result of his guilty plea in July to reckless endangerment. He said the shortened term reflected time off for good behavior.

Yates said he spent his jail time studying and working out physically and that he plans to apply for a job at the Bronx Zoo.

"I would like to further my education by studying animal science and would like one day to open my own zoo," he said.

Ground Zero redevelopment: The Environmental Protection Agency has rejected state and federal requests to monitor the demolition of the Deutsche Bank building, adjacent to Ground Zero, and stepped away from agreements to coordinate with government agencies in the razing of the building.

On Dec. 14, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation announced a multi-phased plan for the demolition of the building, scheduled to begin next year. But EPA officials said they do not believe the area will be fully guarded from toxins in the structure.

The plan "doesn't give me confidence that people will be adequately protected," said David Newman, a member of the EPA's advisory panel told The New York Post in Sunday editions.

Business

Wall Street investigations: Attorney General Eliot Spitzer said Saturday that federal investigators are better equipped now to investigate corruption on Wall Street but vowed state investigators like himself will remain competitive in leading the fight against white-collar crime.

"The SEC is coming back to life and that's good, but we're going to continue to pursue our mandate," Spitzer said. "We are going to be as aggressive going forward as we have been."

Spitzer said it was not good to force financial firms to face multiple interpretations of regulations by individual states. Still, he made clear his office would surrender no ground to reinvigorated federal agencies, like the Securities and Exchange Commission, despite published reports suggesting otherwise.

Spitzer commented two weeks after he de-



Pope on gay marriage: Pope John Paul II blesses faithful Sunday from his studio's window overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. He urged politicians on Sunday to defend the institution of the family against what he called grave challenges, a apparent reference to efforts to legalize marriage between homosexuals.

clared he would run for governor in 2006, which will require large donations, some of which will come from Wall Street firms. He denied the announcement had anything to do with his campaign.

World

Space station supplies: An unmanned Russian cargo spaceship on a vital supply mission docked at the international space station early Sunday, delivering badly needed food for the two-member U.S.-Russian crew, who have been forced to ration their dwindling supplies.

The Progress M-51 docked at the orbiting station at 2:58 a.m. Moscow time on Sunday, said officials at Russian mission control in Korolyov outside Moscow.

The spaceship, which lifted off Friday from the remote Baikonur cosmodrome in the steppes of Kazakhstan, delivered about 2.5 tons of equipment and supplies, including more than 440 pounds of food for Russian cosmonaut Salizhan Sharipov and U.S. astronaut Leroy Chiao, who are in their third month on the station.

The cargo included holiday gifts for the crew from their families and friends, along with turkey for a belated Christmas dinner, space officials said.

Sudan violence: Prime Minister Tony Blair's office on Sunday dismissed a newspaper report that he had ordered the military to prepare 3,000 troops for a possible mission to Sudan's violence-torn Darfur region. "I don't recognize that story at all," a Blair spokesman said on condition of anonymity. "Our position on Sudan has been made clear. Basically, what we are doing is providing whatever help we can to the African Union force and we're working with the African Union and the U.N. to resolve the situation there," the spokesman said.

The Independent newspaper, which cited no sources, reported Sunday that Blair had told military bosses to prepare plans that could be implemented if he decides to order British troops to Sudan next year.

War on terrorism

El Salvador troop deployment: The only country in the Western Hemisphere besides the United States still fielding soldiers in the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq may extend its troop deployment beyond a scheduled return early next year, El Salvador's president said Saturday.

"We're helping the Iraqi people, and if there is the need to prolong our presence, if the authorities need it and we can help, I would not have a problem," President Tony Saca said.

A decision will be made after the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq, he said.

El Salvador is the only Western Hemisphere country with soldiers still aiding the United States in Iraq, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic withdrew their troops.

Salvadoran forces have been in Iraq since August 2003, with 380 troops currently serving there.

Syria accusations: Syria on Sunday dismissed as "baseless and non-objective" accusations that it is training and helping insurgents who attack government and U.S.-led coalition forces in Iraq.

The Al-Baath daily newspaper of the ruling Baath party said the charges were part of a "misleading campaign" that seeks to blame Syria for events in Iraq.

Najaf's police commander Ghalib al-Jazari said Saturday that one of the six people detained on suspicion of organizing last week's bombing in the Iraqi holy city Najaf, an Iraqi named Ali Hussein, had confessed to receiving training in a Syrian camp under the supervision of a Syrian military officer.

El Al-Jazari told the Al-Jazeera Arab satellite station that he was not accusing Syria of being behind the bombing.

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AMC officials tell passengers to pack light

BY VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

With the holiday travel season at its peak, Air Mobility Command officials around the Pacific have a message for on-duty and space-available passengers: pack light.

A significant number of travelers are showing up for roll call unaware of the weight limits placed on personal baggage.

"It's always been a problem here," said Master Sgt. Richard Lawton, noncommissioned officer in charge of passenger service for the AMC terminal at Osan Air Base, South Korea. "You feel for the guys but we have to adhere to our standards."

Whether on official or space-A status, passengers can check in just two pieces of baggage, which cannot exceed 70 pounds each, Lawton said. If those limitations aren't met, the bag will be counted as two pieces.

Items exceeding 100 pounds won't be accepted and must be moved as freight.

There are certain exceptions, Lawton said. B-4 duffel and sea bags are allowed as one piece regardless of size, provided they

Baggage must meet weight limit or be left behind

don't weigh more than 100 pounds. That policy also applies to large garment bags, golf clubs, snow skis, portable bicycles, fishing equipment, rucksacks and musical instruments, he said.

Only one of these outsized or irregularly shaped bags per person will be granted the exception and the second piece still must be of more normal luggage size and weigh 70 pounds or less.

"We've had bags weigh as much as 100 pounds," Lawton said. "The person carrying it has to get rid of it or pay the excess-baggage fee. A lot of times, we wind up giving the stuff that has to be left behind away to the orphanages."

The excess-baggage charge is \$84, but that option is available only to duty passengers with travel orders. Space-available travelers must be within the weight standards. "Basically, they have to get rid of that stuff if they plan on traveling," Lawton said.

Korean-made bags are among the most cumbersome that surface for check-in at Osan, he added. "If they have that bag, we

basically go by that weight. If ... they fill it up, more than likely it's going to exceed the 70-pound limit," Lawton said.

Osan AMC officials have sent letters to transportation offices around the theater that detail baggage limitations and requirements, Lawton said, adding that he believes the information isn't always being given AMC passengers.

"I don't think travelers are being informed by their travel offices," he said. "Most of the passengers we talk to say they didn't know. They don't know. Those letters are in each base's travel offices, where they get itinerary tickets for travel."

"These passengers should be given a copy of this letter along with their itinerary. We mainly want to let people know what the limitations are."

The weight problem hasn't been nearly as prevalent at the AMC terminals on Yokota Air Base in Japan and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, said officials at those bases.

Master Sgt. Thomas Johnson, noncommissioned officer in

charge of passenger services for Yokota's 730th Air Mobility Squadron, said travelers can take some simple steps to ensure they don't haul cumbersome luggage into the terminal.

"The smart thing to do is try to pack lightly," he suggested.

"When traveling in groups, try to pool your baggage. That takes up excess weight and distributes it to other baggage."

Avoid transporting liquids such as shampoo, hair products and detergents, Johnson added: "Things in liquid form tend to weigh more."

"Just make every attempt to travel light," he said. "If your goal is to go shopping, then carry the bare minimum. Don't carry an excessive change of clothes and personal items. If you don't need it, leave those things behind."

"The bottom line, you need to be aware of the baggage limitations. Once people stay within those limits, they'll be fine."

Yoko Miyaki, a travel clerk at the Kadena AMC terminal, said different aircraft have differing baggage restrictions. Passengers on smaller planes such as the

C-12, C-21 and UC-35 are limited to a maximum of two bags weighing a total of 30 pounds, she said, while the 70-pound standard is applied to Patriot Express flights.

"If the bags are overweight, we cannot accept the passengers," she said. "Sometimes people show up and we have to turn them away. They have too much weight. We tell them to open bags and take out items to get under the limit."

The weight standards exist to maintain flight safety, Lawton said. The Allowable Cabin Load — an aircraft's weight limit — cannot be exceeded.

"If we end up getting too much weight on the aircraft, we have to bump passengers and bags to get below that ACL," he added. "Our problems are mainly surfacing on the Patriot Express flights."

Lawton also preaches the light approach to AMC travel, regardless of the type.

When undergoing a permanent change of station, he advised, "Give the majority of your items with your household goods and only take the necessary items that you need. Avoid the big shopping bags, the day prior to your flight."

E-mail Vince Little at: littlev@stripes.com

Petty Officer 2nd Class Chad White gets reacquainted with Jevon, 5 months, as wife Sonja looks on following the submarine USS Houston's arrival at its new permanent home base on Guam.



FRANK WHITMAN
Special to
Stars and Stripes

Houston arrives at new home on Guam

BY FRANK WHITMAN
Special to Stars and Stripes

GUAM — The 80-degree temperatures thawed any idea this was the North Pole, but Guam still was looking a lot like Christmas on Friday morning as the USS Houston pulled into Apra Harbor.

Santa Claus was present to help out, waving from the deck. But mostly, the crew said, it was the family members waiting dockside to welcome the submarine to its new permanent base — just in time for the holidays.

"We made a big effort to get all the families here and then to get here the day before Christmas so the crew can spend Christmas with their families," said Cmdr. Christopher Kaiser, the Houston's commanding officer. "It makes it that much more meaningful."

Also on hand to mark the occasion were Guam government and business officials, Commodore Brad Gehrke, commander of Submarine Squadron 15, and a local dance troupe.

But Kaiser said the weather alone probably was enough to cheer most Houston crew members that they no longer were in their former base in Bremerton, Wash. The sub's two-week voyage brought it from Bremerton via Alaska.

"The last time I was on the bridge it was snowing," Kaiser said. "I had two stocking caps on and gloves and my mouth was all covered up. So this is wonderful."

Guam officials — who said they expect their island's economy to be bolstered by the increased U.S. military presence — said they think it's pretty wonderful, too. Among those giving welcoming speeches at the dockside ceremony were Guam Gov. Felix Camacho and James Adkins, Guam Chamber of Commerce Armed Forces Committee chairman.

"There's no place like Guam as far as support for the military and the submarines coming here. It's a welcoming and warm community. They want the Navy here and the Navy wants to be here so it's good for everyone," Gehrke said.

The Houston joins the USS City of Corpus Christi and the USS San Francisco in Submarine Squadron 15, which was reactivated in February 2001.

"It's great to have our third submarine here to complete our squadron," Gehrke said. "It's great to have our guys here. It's a great Christmas present. The families have been out here for weeks getting settled and anticipating the husbands' arrival. They're all excited."

Iwakuni runway relocation project nominated for award

BY GREG TYLER
Stars and Stripes

A group of Iwakuni engineers now have something in common with a lot of Oscar nominees: Like many finalists for the film award, they say just being nominated is an honor.

The Army Corps of Engineers recently nominated those overseeing Iwakuni's runway relocation effort for its Project Delivery Team of the Year Award. They didn't win — but Iwakuni officials say they're just happy to be nominated.

"We are all very proud of the example set by both the American and Japanese engineers working together here," said Capt. Stewart Upton, base spokesman.

The nomination was for the massive land reclamation undertaking slated for completion in 2009, Upton said.

"The nomination is just the beginning of the work being done here in gaining recognition," he said, "not just for the quality but for the coordination between our two governments."

The \$2.2 billion project, which began in 1997, is to entail moving some 14,836 cubic feet of land from nearby Atsuta Mountain via conveyor systems, and building an 8,552-foot runway about 1,000 yards offshore from

the existing runway, air operation centers, port facilities and related utilities.

In 1994, after 20 years of negotiating, Japanese officials announced plans to build the runway, which is designed to decrease the danger of a plane crash in densely populated neighborhoods and a nearby petroleum plant, and to expose local residents to less aircraft noise.

"This is the largest construction project that the government of Japan has done and will be the only U.S. government-controlled deep-water port and heavy-lift airfield in Asia," Mark Nedzaba, resident engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stated in a base news report Thursday.

The project is the largest land reclamation project in Department of Defense history, officials said.

"The Government of Japan has provided excellent facilities," he added, "and has been a significant asset for the U.S. Forces with this runway relocation project."

Japanese and U.S. officials have said the runway will be one of the best on the western Pacific Rim, and is being built with safeguards against natural disasters, such as earthquakes.

E-mail Greg Tyler at: tylerg@stripes.com

iraqi general: Suicide bomber was not Guard

BY BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Last week's suicide attack in a U.S. base in Mosul was not carried out by a member of the Iraqi security forces, although the attacker may have been wearing an Iraqi uniform, the head of Iraq's armed forces said Sunday.

"Certainly he was not a member of the National Guards because all of our men stationed in the base have been accounted for," Gen. Babaker B. Shawkat Zebari said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He spoke as the Ansar al-Sunna Army group, which has claimed responsibility for the Mosul strike, released a video of what appeared to be the actual bombing.

On Tuesday, an attacker blew himself up in a crowded mess hall at the Marez base just south of Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad. The explosion, the deadliest strike on a U.S. military facility, triggered a wide-ranging investigation into how the attacker penetrated the heavily guarded area.

Asked about President Bush's comments in which he said members of Iraq's fledgling military were fleeing from combat, Zebari replied: "I think the press recently received misleading information."

The general said none of his soldiers had deserted from the battlefield, but acknowledged that some recruits undergoing training decided to quit after they were told they would be posted to the restive city of Fallujah that was retaken from insurgents last month by U.S. and Iraqi troops.

Zebari claimed that foreign fighters are still infiltrating into Iraq from Syria.

"I don't know if [the Syrian] government is closing its eyes or the terrorists are finding their ways to cross," Zebari said.

Zebari said that Arabs using forged Iraqi identity cards were detained near the Syrian border on Thursday. He said the men



This photograph released by the U.S. Army on Friday shows a dining hall at a U.S. military installation in Mosul, Iraq, where a large explosion on Dec. 21 left 22 dead and many more injured.

were detained with explosives in their possession.

Zebari's comments came a day after Najaf's police commander, Ghaleb al-Jazairi, said they detained an Iraqi who confessed to receiving training in a camp in Syria under the supervision of a Syrian military officer. The man was apparently involved in a bombing in Najaf earlier this month that killed 54 people.

Syria on Sunday dismissed al-Jazairi's statements as "baseless and unobjective."

Zebari said the troubled northern city of Mosul was under control of U.S. and government forces and that "more military units are being sent there to restore calm."

The base where Tuesday's attack occurred in Mosul also was used by members of Iraq's security forces. Three members of the

Iraqi National Guard — a paramilitary internal security force — also died in the blast.

The U.S. military said it appeared likely that an individual in an Iraqi military uniform — who was probably wearing an explosive-laden vest — carried out the attack.

"That is possible because uniforms of National Guards, police and army are available in the market," said Zebari. "It is not difficult for a person to wear one."

The Ansar al-Sunna Army group has claimed responsibility for the attack saying it was a suicide attack.

The dead included 18 Americans — 13 servicemen and five U.S. civilian contractors — and three Iraqi guardsmen and one unidentified "non-U.S. person," according to figures released by the U.S. military.

Of the 69 wounded, 44 were U.S. military personnel and the remainder American civilians, Iraqi troops and other foreigners.

Zebari said Iraqi forces are getting stronger every day and that he expected them to be capable of replacing the Americans within six months to a year.

"The insurgents are getting weaker. Hardly a day passes without detaining or killing dozens of them," he said.

Also Sunday, police in the northern city of Kirkuk captured two brothers, Rasem Qara and Abdul-Baset, who allegedly confessed to having links with Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Al-Qaida in Iraq network, Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qader said.

In Baghdad, masked gunmen assassinated a high-ranking Iraqi police officer, Col. Yassin Ibrahim Jawad, and wounded his two bodyguards, police said.

Video shows footage of the attack on U.S. base in Mosul

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The radical Islamic group that claimed responsibility for the deadliest attack on a U.S. base in Iraq released on Sunday dramatic videotape showing three militants describing their plans to carry out the suicide bombing, which killed more than 20 people.

The footage also shows what appears to be the attack itself, showing a fireball rising in the air and a torn white tent. In the Dec. 21 attack, a bomber — probably dressed in an Iraqi military uniform — slipped into a dining tent packed with soldiers eating lunch and set off his explosives at Marez base on the outskirts of the city of Mosul in northern Iraq, according to U.S. officials.

Ansar al-Sunna issued a statement soon after saying it carried the attack out.

In the new video, which carried a Dec. 20 date on the footage, three guerrillas clad in black, wearing face masks and carrying AK-47 assault rifles describe their plans.

One of the men read a statement saying another of the three was identified as Umar al-Musallhi — who would carry out the attack by breaking into the base through the perimeter fence. The man reading the statement embraced the bomber, who was wearing an explosives-laden vest. "He will take advantage of the change of guards. We have been observing their schedule for a long time. This lion will then proceed to his target and we will take advantage of lunch time. He will storm the dining room where the crusaders and their [Iraqi] allies are gathered," said the man.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Saturday, Dec. 25, 2004, at least 1,323 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1034 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians.

AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday.

The British military has reported 75 deaths: Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,185 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 925 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No new deaths reported. The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army 1st Lt. Christopher W. Barnett, 32, Baton Rouge, La., died Thursday in Baghdad, Iraq, when an explosive detonated near his vehicle; assigned to the National Guard's 1st Battalion, 156th Army Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, Shreveport, La.

U.S. officials denied abuses in Cuba

BY CAROL D. LEONNIG

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — At least 10 current and former detainees at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have lodged allegations of abuse similar to the incidents described by FBI agents in newly released documents, claims that were denied by the government but gained credibility with the reports from the agents, their attorneys say.

In public statements after their release and in documents filed with federal courts, the detainees have said they were beaten before and during interrogations, "short-shackled" to the floor and otherwise mistreated as part of the effort to get them to confess to being members of al-Qaida or the Taliban.

Even some of the detainees' attorneys acknowledged that they were initially skeptical, mainly because there has been little evidence that captors at Guantanamo Bay engaged in the kind of abuse discovered at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison.

But last Monday, the American Civil Liberties Union released FBI memos, which it obtained

through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, in which agents described witnessing or learning of serious mistreatment of detainees.

"On a couple of occasions, I entered interview rooms to find a detainee chained hand and foot in a fetal position to the floor, with no chain food or water," an unidentified agent wrote on Aug. 2, 2004, for example. "Most times they had urinated or defecated on themselves, and had been left there for 18, 24 hours or more."

Brent Mickum, a Washington attorney for one of the detainees, said that "now there's no question these guys have been tortured. When we first got involved in this case, I wondered whether this could all be true. But every allegation that I've heard has now come to pass and has been confirmed by the government's own papers."

A Pentagon spokesman has said the military has an ongoing investigation of torture claims and takes credible allegations seriously.

Pentagon officials and lawyers say the military has been careful not to abuse detainees and has complied with treaties on the handling of enemy prisoners "to the extent possible" in the middle of a war.

Insurgent army gains clout, eclipsing al-Qaida

BY RAWYA RAGEH
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The Ansar al-Sunnah Army has emerged from its roots as a little-known militant group operating in northern Iraq to become the country's deadliest terror network, capable of carrying out spectacular strikes like last week's suicide bombing at a U.S. base and virtually eclipsing al-Qaida's cell in the war-torn nation.

Unlike al-Qaida, Ansar al-Sunnah is believed to be made up mainly of Iraqis, and its apparent strategy of targeting only Americans and those viewed as collaborating with them — Iraqi security forces and Kurds — may have increased its support, in contrast to other groups that have hit more clearly Iraqi civilian targets.

Nearly five months after the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in April 2003, Ansar al-Sunnah's first statement surfaced on the Internet, pronouncing itself "a group of jihadists, scholars, and political and military experts" dedicated to creating an Islamic state in Iraq.

The statement was signed by the group's "emir," or leader, the previously unknown Abu Abdullah al-Hassan Bin Mahmud.

Since then, it has carried out numerous bombings and attacks, particularly in northern Iraq — and shown its ruthlessness with the slaying in August of 12 kid-

napped Nepalese construction workers, releasing video showing their deaths. In its deadliest operation, Ansar al-Sunnah claimed responsibility for Feb. 1 suicide bombings against two Kurdish political parties in Irbil, killing 109 people.

Tuesday's attack on U.S. forces at Mosul showed even greater sophistication and planning, killing 22 people, mostly American soldiers and civilians.

Now the group is warning Iraqis not to participate in crucial Jan. 30 elections, promising to attack polling stations.

But who exactly is behind Ansar al-Sunnah and how it was formed remains a mystery. Some experts believe the group splintered from Ansar al-Islam, an al-Qaida-linked group established in September 2001.

Ansar al-Islam was founded by Mullah Krekar, who has been living as a refugee in Norway since 1991. The group vowed to set up a conservative Islamic state in northern Iraq, and its members have trained in Af-

ghanistan and provided safe haven to al-Qaida members fleeing the U.S. invasion there.

The offshoot group may have changed its name to Ansar al-Sunnah — Arabic for "supporters of the sunnah," of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad — as an attempt to appeal to Iraq's minority Sunni Arabs, experts suggest.

There is nothing to corroborate this theory except that the group mainly operates in northern Iraq where Ansar al-Islam is based.

Rohan Gunaratna
Terrorism expert

Mohammed Salah, a Cairo-based expert on Islamic militancy, said research indicates that the Ansar al-Sunnah Army was established by a mix of various Sunni Muslim anti-occupation factions that came together after the end of the war.

They chose the name Ansar al-Sunnah (loosely translated as "supporters of the traditions of Prophet Muhammad") to distinguish the Sunni group from Shiite militias, Salah said.

The group now seems to include national-ists and other secular people opposed to

the U.S. presence in Iraq who are not typical religious fundamentalists or extremists but who "choose the cover of Islam as a propaganda that sells well."

The group seeks an Islamic government and Islamic law in Iraq, stressing its opposition to democracy, which it says replaces God's rightful rule with that of man.

Still, it remains unclear whether Ansar al-Sunnah is linked to Osama bin Laden's network, or whether it is actually competing with it.

U.S. officials have said Ansar al-Islam, its alleged parent group, is believed linked to al-Qaida.

But while al-Zarqawi's Tawhid and Jihad group in October declared allegiance to bin Laden, changing its name to al-Qaida in Iraq, no such announcement was made by Ansar al-Sunnah.

Singapore-based terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna said Zarqawi's group allied itself to al-Qaida because it seems to be expanding its recruitment efforts to the entire Middle East and Europe as opposed to Ansar al-Sunnah's "exclusive Iraqi focus."

With or without al-Qaida, it looks like Ansar al-Sunnah is here to stay.

"I think Ansar al-Sunnah will, as an organization, last longer and will enjoy a broader base of support than al-Qaida in Iraq," Gunaratna said.

Mysterious front companies hindering oil-for-food inquiry

BY SAM CAGE
The Associated Press

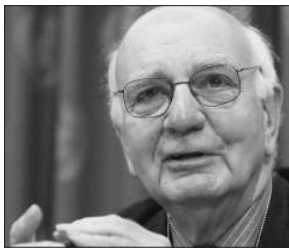
GENEVA — The U.N.-ordered probe into oil-for-food corruption is being seriously hampered by an elaborate system of ghost firms set up around the world to cover the tracks of bribes to Saddam Hussein as he cheated the \$60 billion program, a top investigator said.

Some front companies in this global oil trading center and elsewhere that dealt with Saddam have been liquidated or have hidden ownership, complicating the search for evidence of financial improprieties, said Swiss criminal lawyer Mark Pieth. He's one of three commission members leading the probe headed by former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker.

Major oil trading companies and individuals — from American businessmen to French, Chinese and Russian politicians — are suspected of benefiting from lucrative Iraqi oil contracts that involved kickbacks, according to the independent panel's initial findings.

Those who profited may have been able to hide behind a web of fiction by making transactions through ghost firms that exist mostly on paper, Pieth told The Associated Press.

Despite the thin trail, Pieth said he was confident investigators would ultimately trace the funds back to those who may have made illicit profits — or allowed Saddam and his regime to profit illegally — during the oil-for-food program, which existed from 1996 until 2003.



"It is a problem. Yes, of course it is, but on the other hand we also have means of finding the beneficial owners," Pieth said. "There usually is, if the banks have done their job."

Pieth said national authorities and banks in Switzerland and other nations where front companies handled oil-for-food deals should have records of who was behind the firms.

"Switzerland and Liechtenstein have promised to help," Pieth said of the two countries where more than two dozen companies got oil under the program, according to an AP examination of records.

Neither nation is known for having oil reserves of its own. But according to a list Volcker released

of 248 companies that "lifted," or exported, Iraqi oil under the program, companies based in Switzerland took more than those from any other country except France and Russia. The tiny principality of Liechtenstein — which has 33,000 inhabitants — came in eighth on the list.

Volcker has said that being on the list doesn't necessarily imply guilt in paying kickbacks.

Switzerland and Liechtenstein are among countries whose lax regulations and traditions of discretion in business and banking make them attractive for trading companies.

Front companies registered in other tax havens — such as Cyprus, Jordan, Panama, Curacao in the Caribbean, and Jersey in

Countries participating in oil-for-food program

According to a U.N.-ordered inquiry, these are the top 10 countries that purchased oil from Iraq under the oil-for-food program from 1996 until 2003:

Top 10 countries	In billions
1. Russia	\$19.26
2. France	4.39
3. Switzerland	3.48
4. Britain	3.38
5. Turkey	3.34
6. Italy	2.72
7. China	2.63
8. Liechtenstein	2.47
9. Spain	1.64
10. Malaysia	1.49

The United States is listed in 26th place at \$482.83 million.

SOURCE: United Nations

AP

the Channel Islands off the United Kingdom — also feature in the oil-for-food investigation.

The program, which began in 1996 and ended last year after the U.S. invasion ousted Saddam, allowed Iraq to trade about \$60 billion worth of oil for food, medicine and other necessities that became scarce under strict U.N. economic sanctions imposed after the Gulf War. The program was credited with preventing widespread starvation.

Congressional investigators who also are looking into corruption at the program said in November that they had uncovered evidence Saddam's government raised more than \$21.3 billion in illegal revenue by subverting U.N. sanctions and the oil-for-food program.

Volcker's independent commission was set up this year at the request of U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to investigate the program. Pieth is the second commissioner and the third is South African Richard Goldstone, who prosecuted Yugoslav war crimes.



Mark Pieth

A preliminary report on findings is expected to be released in January, but the \$30 million probe isn't expected to be finished until well into 2005.

"We're not going to do diplomatic soft talk," Pieth said. "If there's something to be said, we are going to name these people involved."

2 Mass. kids helping troops phone home

Young entrepreneurs turn used cell phones into free calling cards for GIs

BY KEN MAGUIRE
The Associated Press

BOSTON — For all the billions of dollars being spent on the war in Iraq, 14-year-old Brittany Bergquist is surprised that the Army doesn't do what she and her little brother do: help soldiers phone home.

"I'm kind of happy that they didn't supply them," she said, "because we've always wanted to do something for the soldiers."

With \$14 from their piggy banks, she and her 12-year-old brother Robbie started Cell Phones For Soldiers. In less than eight months, the organization has provided \$250,000 worth of prepaid calling cards for American soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait.

They raise money by collecting old cellular phones and selling them to companies that refurbish them for resale on the Internet, then use it to buy the calling cards.

"I'm so happy that we can help them," said Brittany, an eighth-grader from Norwell, Mass.

It all started in April, when the family heard about a Massachusetts soldier who ran up \$7,600 in cell phone charges calling home from Iraq.

Cellular provider T-Mobile forgoe much of the bill. But Brittany and Robbie figured there must be other soldiers — including their cousin, Donnie Williamson — who are stationed in Iraq and want to call home more often but can't afford it.

The Bergquist kids pooled their



Brittany Bergquist, 14, left, and her brother, 12-year-old Robbie, pose in their Norwell, Mass., home. With \$14 from their piggy banks, the pair started Cell Phones For Soldiers, which provides prepaid calling cards for American soldiers in Iraq, Afghanistan and Kuwait. The organization collects old cell phones and sells them to companies that refurbish them, then uses the money to buy calling cards for U.S. troops.

funds — \$14 — and got friends to kick in another \$7. They opened a bank account at South Shore Savings Bank, which was so impressed it contributed \$500.

Yard sales followed, and newspaper articles. Soon, national TV news crews were calling and the kids gave live interviews on morning shows.

Hundreds of schools and organizations, from Hawaii to Georgia, have started local chapters and become drop-off centers for used cell phones.

"It's hard doing everything," Brittany said. "But it doesn't matter to us. We think about how hard the soldiers work every day

and they don't have a choice to stop."

On Tuesday, the Internal Revenue Service granted Cell Phones For Soldiers nonprofit status.

Many large companies have told the Bergquists they were waiting for the nonprofit status so their contributions are tax deductible, said their father, Bob Bergquist, a science teacher at Norwell Middle School. Mother Gail is also a teacher.

One challenge for the Bergquists has been identifying troops before they deploy, because once they are overseas it gets harder to contact individual soldiers. The Pentagon only deliv-

ers mail from family or friends; unaddressed bulk mailings are prohibited.

"We fortunately live in an American society that's very generous [but] it overwhelmed our mailing system in the past," said Army Lt. Col. Joe Yoswa, a Defense Department spokesman.

He says soldiers can use phone banks and Internet cafes, but it's up to them to pay the fees out of pocket.

Using a cell phone in Iraq can cost a soldier up to \$3 a minute in roaming charges, according to Bob Bergquist.

The Bergquists have traveled to Minnesota, Texas, Louisiana,

and New York to personally hand out calling cards to soldiers about to be deployed to war zones.

They've made sacrifices; Brittany skipped a statewide cheerleading competition and Robbie has missed big soccer and hockey games.

"We have a scrapbook that we keep," Robbie said. "We look back at what we've done. It always helps keep us motivated."

One wrote: "Hearing from family members is what keeps a soldier going and gives them the drive to get the job done and get home."

Helping families stay connected is the biggest reward, Brittany said.

That's a big motivation, for families to know where their sons and daughters are at all times," she said.

They also get e-mails from people who oppose the war.

"We tell them we're not supporting or endorsing the war," Bob Bergquist said. "What we're concerned about are the soldiers. ... What we want to do is support them."

The Bergquist kids have quickly become role models. Brittany will be featured in an upcoming issue of Teen People magazine. Good Housekeeping and Parade Magazine are also doing stories.

But all the attention won't distract from their mission, the kids said.

"I think we're going to be doing this forever," Brittany said.

As long as there are troops out home, we'll be doing this."

Reserve forces put lives on hold while waiting for word on Iraq

BY DON BABWIN
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Kevin Lackey is eager to take what he's learned in the Marine Reserves into war in Iraq. Theresa Lackey can't bear to watch the news, for fear she'll see soldiers searching for the enemy in houses pockmarked by bullet holes — the kind of work her son has been training for.

The Lackeys live in suburban Chicago, but their story could be told from anywhere in the country. As accounts of the war and the soldiers fighting there dominate the headlines, there is a quieter story for more than 1 million National Guard and Reserve troops — waiting and wondering if they'll be sent to Iraq. Or sent back.

They've put their lives on hold, put off college, buying homes and cars, knowing they could join nearly 186,000 of their Guard and Reserve colleagues now on active duty, more than 60,000 of whom are in Iraq or Afghanistan.

They've said their goodbyes only to be told at the last minute they're not going anywhere — not yet, anyway — as their families brace for their deployment.

Kevin Lackey, 20, said his com-

manders were so sure his unit was going to be activated and deployed to Iraq this fall. "They told us to make our wills, tell family members to have a life without you and life with you in a combat zone. Then that fell through."

"It's like a roller coaster," said Theresa Lackey. That's particularly true during the holidays, which she suspects will be her son's last at home before he ships out.

Matt Comeaux also uses "roller coaster" to describe the last few months. A sergeant in the Illinois National Guard, Comeaux said he learned last spring that his battalion was being activated this winter.

Knowing he would be gone for 18 months, the 36-year-old divorced father moved out of the house he was renting and put his belongings in storage.

Such uncertainty is a reality of being at war, when needs for more troops can change rapidly, said Major Tim Franklin, spokesman for the Illinois Army National Guard. "Those decisions are made at the Pentagon and (U.S. Army Forces Command) based on the needs of commanders on the ground in Iraq," he said.

Comeaux isn't angry but de-

scribes the situation as "very emotional."

"It's up and down, not knowing what is going on," said Comeaux, who is staying at a friend's house, living out of a suitcase.

Comeaux said most of the guardsmen he knows don't want to go to Iraq, and some cringe when he calls to give them an update. But "they know that's their job," he said.



Marine reservist Kevin Lackey poses Tuesday with his parents, Bruce and Theresa Lackey, in Willowbrook, Ill. Lackey is one of more than 1 million National Guard and Reserve troops who have their lives on hold awaiting possible orders to Iraq.

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Evening Service	
Children's Sunday School	
Youth Adrenal Service	
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6:00pm	

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IN THE WORLD

Polls suggest lead for Ukraine opposition



Observers, in the background, watch Sunday as a man casts his ballot at a polling station in Kiev, Ukraine. Rival candidates Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich faced off Sunday in a repeat election triggered by a fraudulent runoff vote and massive protests that resulted in an unprecedented third round in Ukraine's fiercely waged presidential contest. The vote is being monitored by 12,187 foreign observers from 43 international organizations and 31 countries.

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — All three exit polls tracking Sunday's presidential election gave opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko a commanding lead of at least 15 percentage points in Ukraine's presidential election.

The government-established and funded Ukrainian Institute of Social Research and Social Monitoring Center showed Yushchenko winning with 58.1 percent of the vote and Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich garnering 38.4 percent. The poll showed 3.5 percent of respondents voting for neither candidate, and the margin of error was 2 percent.

The poll had a sample of 13,500 voters, polled in face-to-face interviews at 360 polling stations throughout Ukraine. The survey was sponsored by nine state academic organizations, including sociologists' associations and six universities.

The Razumkov Center of Political Studies and Kiev International Institute of Sociology showed Yushchenko winning with 56.5 percent and Yanukovich collecting 41.3 percent of the vote, and 2.3 percent of voters choosing neither candidate.

The poll surveyed some 30,000

voters in 360 polling stations using anonymous questionnaires the respondents place in boxes. No margin of error was given.

The Razumkov Center receives funding from numerous Western institutions including NATO, the United Nations and the Soros Foundation.

A third exit poll, by Frank Luntz, a pollster for the U.S. Republican Party, and Douglas Schoen, of the Washington-based market research company Penn, Schoen & Berland, showed Yushchenko winning with 56 to Yanukovich's 41 percent, Schoen said. Three percent voted against all, and the margin of error was 2 percent.

Their poll surveyed up to 10,000 voters on behalf of Ukraine's ICTV television, which is owned by outgoing President Leonid Kuchma's son-in-law Viktor Pinchuk.

Exit polls during the first two rounds of the election showed widely varying results, prompting questions about their validity.

All sides hoped the repeat election would resolve Ukraine's fiercely waged presidential contest after fraud wrecked one vote and prompted massive protests that deeply divided the nation.

The vote is momentous for Ukraine, a nation of 48 million people caught between an eastward-expanding European Union and an increasingly assertive Russia, its former imperial and Soviet-era master.

At the protest tent camp in Kiev that the opposition has maintained for over a month, hundreds of Yushchenko supporters were confident the vote would bring victory.

"Soon no more of this," said Valery Denysenko, a 55-year-old who came from southern Ukraine to join the tent camp, as he sipped his morning coffee.

Kuchma said he cast his ballot hoping the results will stick. "In my opinion, the one who loses should call and congratulate the winner ... and put an end to this prolonged election campaign."

Yushchenko, a former Central Bank chief and prime minister, wants to bring Ukraine closer to the West, while the Kremlin-backed Yanukovich, the current prime minister, emphasizes tightening the Slavic country's ties with Russia as a means to maintaining stability.

The vote has thrown a spotlight on Ukrainians' starkly differing views of how to bring their nation into the 21st century.

Japan mourns death of Princess Kikuko, age 92

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Hundreds of mourners paid their final respects Sunday to Princess Kikuko, the emperor's aunt who was seen as one of the most progressive members of Japan's tradition-bound royal family.

Kikuko, also known as Princess Takamatsu, died earlier this month at age 92. Media reports cited blood poisoning as the cause.

White-robed Shinto priests bowed as her coffin was carried out of her home to a hearse and transported to Tokyo's Toshima-gaoka cemetery.

Crown Prince Naruhito, his wife Masako, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and other dignitaries gathered for the ceremony, which was attended by more than 560 people, said Imperial Household Agency spokesman Takamitsu Aya.

Emperor Akihito and Empress

Michiko did not attend the service, as is customary. On Saturday, they visited the princess' home to pay their respects, said Aya.

Later, as the event was opened to the public, an additional 1,300 mourners filed into the cemetery prior to the cremation and entombment.

Kikuko was the widow of the late Emperor Hirohito's younger brother Takamatsu and the granddaughter of Yoshihito Tokugawa, Japan's last shogun, or feudal lord.

She was seen as one of the most progressive members of Japan's imperial family.

After her husband died of lung cancer in 1987, Kikuko asked doctors to perform an autopsy and publicly disclose the results, causing a stir.

In 1995, she chose to publish his diaries, which were written before and during World War II and contained criticism of Japan's wartime military.

She also openly called for legal changes to allow females to ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne.

Japan's imperial family is facing its most serious succession crisis in centuries, and there is strong public support to one day let 3-year-old Princess Aiko, Naruhito's daughter, take the throne.

Kikuko had no children.



Above: Japan's Crown Prince Naruhito, right, and Crown Princess Masako, second right, mourn Sunday with Prince Akihito, center, Princess Kiko, second left, and Princess Sayako during a funeral ceremony for late Princess Kikuko, an aunt of Emperor Akihito, at a Tokyo cemetery. Princess Kikuko died on Dec. 18 in Tokyo at the age of 92. Left: Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi bows to pay his respects during the funeral of Princess Kikuko.

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At Fussa Gate: Left on 16 to light. Turn right. Take next left. Church on left.

Exiled former president of Peru vows return in '06

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — Alberto Fujimori, the former president of Peru now in exile in Japan, said he will return for president in 2006, the *Estado S. Paulo* newspaper reported Sunday.

In an e-mail interview, Fujimori said he will return to Peru and run for president in 2006.

"The people are inviting me and I will be by their side to campaign in the 2006 elections," Fujimori told *Estado*.

Indeed, he enjoys the support of the Peruvian people.

A recent poll by Datum put Fujimori, who was president of Peru from 1990 to 2001, in first place with 24 percent of the vote. His closest rival is Alan Garcia, who was president of Peru from 1985 to 1990.

"I always maintained a high level of approval during my presidency," Fujimori told *Estado*. "The 10 years flew by, but it was marked by an improvement in basic infrastructure that positively changed the lives of the Peruvian people," he said.

Marxist rebels kidnap tourists in Colombia

BOGOTÁ, Colombia — Marxist rebels have abducted at least eight Colombian tourists celebrating Christmas at a lakeside spa in the northwest, officials said Saturday.

Fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, raided a cluster of bungalows late Friday near San Rafael, 140 miles northwest of Bogotá, and herded between 8 to 10 vacationers into vehicles, Jorge Mejia, deputy governor of Antioquia state, told *The Associated Press*.

"Unfortunately, witnesses did not report the kidnapping to authorities until late today, so the guerrillas have had plenty of time to reach their hideouts deep in the mountains," Mejia said.

He said army troops and police supported by helicopters are searching the region.

Several killed in huge riot in China

HONG KONG — Several people were killed and dozens were injured in a riot triggered when police allegedly beat to death a resident in southern China, newspapers reported Sunday.

The reports in Hong Kong's *Wen Wei Po* and Apple Daily newspapers differed widely over the size of the mob and what led to the clash Saturday in the Lang village in Guangdong province.

Wen Wei Po said nearly 50,000 people faced off against hundreds of police officers after security forces beat to death a relative of a student injured in a traffic accident following a dispute over compensation. The *Apple Daily* article, meanwhile, said about 1,000 people rioted after security officials beat to death a 15-year-old boy for stealing a bicycle.

Officials to submit anti-Taiwan-secession law

BEIJING — Top Chinese lawmakers agreed Sunday to submit a proposed anti-secession law to the full legislature early next year, in a legal maneuver aimed at pushing self-ruling Taiwan to unite with the communist mainland.

The lawmakers described the law as "extremely necessary" and "very timely" at their discussions Sunday attended by legislative chairman Wu Bangguo, who is China's No. 2 leader by rank, the government's Xinhua News Agency reported.

Taiwan contends the law could serve as a pretext for a military attack.

Leaders of the National People's Congress, China's lawmaking body, "unanimously" suggested the full congress deliberate on the law when it meets next year, Xinhua said.

From *The Associated Press*

Karzai appoints two warlords to influential governorships

BY PAUL HAVEN

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan president Hamid Karzai on Sunday appointed two warlords, formerly in his Cabinet, to influential



Karzai

governorships in an attempt to keep the strongmen happy — but out of his central government.

Gul Agha Sherzai, the former public works minister, was named governor of southern Kandahar province, a post he controlled once before. Sayed Hussain Anwari, the former agriculture minister, was named governor of Kabul province, which encompasses the capital city.

The appointments were announced Sunday in a presidential decree.

Karzai had sacked the two

men, along with powerful former Defense Minister Mohammed Fahim, as part of a sweeping Cabinet reshuffle on Thursday, earning praise for kicking gunslingers out of his government in favor of professionals.

A presidential spokesman, Khaled Ahmed, said the men had been effective ministers and were dismissed only because they lacked the university degrees now constitutionally required for all Cabinet members.

"They were qualified people, but unfortunately because of all the warfare in Afghanistan, people who chose jihad did not finish their education," he said. "But we wanted to promote them and keep them in the government so they could continue their good work."

The gubernatorial appointments are likely to stir unease among human rights groups, who claim the warlords abuse rights and don't abide dissent.

Ironically, many of the strongmen in Karzai's former Cabinet had been pressured to take the

jobs in the capital in order to cut them off from their regional power bases, under a U.S.-backed program.

But such international sentiment shifting to the importance of creating a clean, professional Cabinet, some of them are being sent back.

More than three years after coming to power, the central government still relies on private armies to help control the vast, lawless countryside. Karzai must walk a political tightrope, keeping the strongmen in check without alienating them.

Fahim, a major Tajik strongman and the head of the northern alliance that helped the United States oust the Taliban in 2001, is still without a new job. There is talk, however, that he is likely to be offered a post as security adviser to the president — a non-Cabinet position that would skirt the education requirement.

In other news, former Central Bank adviser Noorullah Dilawar was named to head the bank, replacing Anwar ul-Haq Ahadi, who took over as Finance Minister.

Saudi Arabia bans key Islamic charity

BY ABDULLAH AL-SHIIHI

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Saudi authorities have banned a major charity group in a continuing crackdown on funds suspected of financing terror groups, officials said Sunday.

The Administration of Mosques and Charity Projects was shut down and ordered to halt all its activities, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

"The decision was made to control the charities and prevent the ill-motivated from penetrating them," they said.

They said the law was imposed upon "official request" but declined to say who had requested the shutdown.

The charity claims to have built some 1,500 schools since it started in 1990. Its other main tasks is to finance preachers and print Islamic publications.

Saudi Arabia has cracked down on charities suspected of funneling money to terrorists, including

strict oversight to ensure the money is not misdirected for terror activities, and has sought to quiet some prominent clerics known for anti-Western sermons. It has set up a joint counterterrorism task force with the United States, comprising law enforcement officials and officials from various agencies in both countries.

In June, the Saudi government dissolved Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation, one of the biggest charities in the oil-rich kingdom, after complaints from the United States and other countries that it is suspected of bankrolling al-Qaida, the terror network led by Osama bin Laden.

The Saudi government said it had no evidence that the charity was financing terrorism but it called the measure "correctional."

Washington ordered U.S. banks to block the assets of the five branches and those belonging to Aqeed Abdulaziz al-Aqil, Al-Haramain's former leader. The U.S. government accused the branches and al-Aqil of providing "financial, material and logistical support" to al-Qaida, bin Laden and the Taliban, the former rulers of Afghanistan.

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Massive quake, tsunamis kill thousands in Asia

More than 11,300 dead in disaster

BY DILIP GANGULY
The Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Tidal waves from a massive undersea earthquake smashed into coastlines across Asia, washing away whole villages in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India and dragging sunbathers out to sea and snorkelers across jagged reefs at tourist havens in Thailand. More than 11,300 people were killed in seven countries.

The death toll from the most powerful earthquake in four decades climbed steadily throughout Sunday as authorities counted bodies washed up on beaches and left hanging like rag dolls from trees.

Foreign tourists were among the dead and the thousands of others who were reported missing. Tens of thousands fled the coasts for higher ground, fearing aftershocks and further flood surges.

Worst hit was Sri Lanka — an island nation some 1,000 miles west of the epicenter. The death toll stood at 4,500, according to police and Tamil Tiger rebels, and 1 million people were displaced. Sri Lanka's government declared a national disaster.

The 9.0-magnitude earthquake — the strongest since a 9.2 magnitude temblor in Alaska in 1964 — struck just before 7 a.m. off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, about 1,000 miles northwest of Jakarta, the capital, the U.S. Geological Survey said. It was 6 miles deep, and was followed by a half-dozen powerful aftershocks, ranging in mag-



AP photos

Residents carry a body of a victim after tidal waves hit following an earthquake in Lhokseumawe, Aceh province, Indonesia, Sunday.

nitude from almost 6 to 7.3.

Traveling at nearly jetliner speeds, the first huge waves began pummeling southern Thailand an hour after the quake. In 2½ hours, the torrents had traveled some 1,000 miles and slammed India and Sri Lanka. They eventually struck the East Africa coast in Somalia, killing at least nine people.

Towns in Sumatra's Aceh province, the closest region to the earthquake's epicenter, were

swamped by the waves. The health ministry said at least 4,185 people were killed, and hundreds more were missing in the area.

The quake occurred at a place where several huge geological plates push against each other with massive force. The survey said a 620-mile section along the boundary of the plates shifted, motion that triggered the sudden displacement of a huge volume of water.

The reverberations sent waves as high as 20 feet thundering into

the coasts of six countries, sweeping away tourists, fishermen, hotels, homes and cars.

"Suddenly this huge wave came, rushing down the beach, destroying everything in its wake," said Simon Clark, 29, a photographer from London vacationing on Thailand's Ngai Island.

"People that were snorkeling were dragged along the coral and washed up on the beach, and people that were sunbathing got washed into the sea."

SEE QUAKE ON PAGE 11

Affected nations not in tsunami warning system

BY JOSEPH B. VERRENGIA
The Associated Press

The catastrophic death toll in Asia caused by a massive tsunami might have been reduced had India and Sri Lanka been part of an international warning system designed to warn coastal communities about potentially deadly waves, scientists say.

More than 5,000 people in India and Sri Lanka were among at least 11,300 people killed after being hit by walls of water triggered by a tremendous earthquake early Sunday off Sumatra.

The warning system is designed to alert nations that potentially destructive waves may hit their coastlines within three to 14 hours. Scientists said seismic networks recorded Sunday's massive earthquake, but without wave sensors in the region, there was no way to determine the direction a tsunami would travel.

A single wave station south of the earthquake's epicenter registered tsunami activity less than 2 feet high heading south toward Australia, researchers said.

The international warning system was started in 1965, the year after a tsunami associated with a magnitude 9.2 temblor struck Alaska in 1964. It is administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Member states include all the major Pacific rim nations in North America, Asia and South America, as well as the Pacific islands, Australia and New Zealand. It also includes France, which has sovereignty over some Pacific islands, and Russia.

Bush's condolences

CRAWFORD, Texas — President Bush expressed his condolences Sunday to the victims of the massive earthquake and tidal waves that hit southern and southeast Asia. Officials said U.S. relief efforts already were under way.

"The United States stands ready to offer all appropriate assistance to those nations most affected," deputy presidential press secretary Trent Duffy said in a statement.

The statement, issued aboard Air Force One en route to Texas from Washington, said "the president expresses his sincere condolences" over the "terrible loss of life and suffering" caused by the earthquake and tidal waves that hit seven countries.

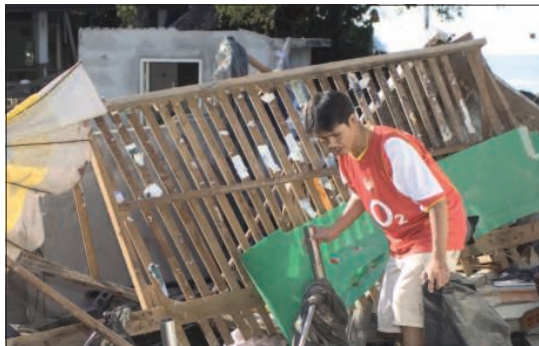
The statement said U.S. relief efforts were already under way to help people in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, a string of 1,192 coral atolls off the southwestern coast of India.

From The Associated Press



Left: Residents are evacuated using a police truck after tidal waves hit the town of Lhokseumawe, Aceh province, Indonesia.

Above: Lhokseumawe residents stand on a flooded street. Tidal waves swamped Indonesian towns near the epicenter of Sunday's massive undersea earthquake, killing thousands of people and leaving bodies wedged in trees as the waters receded, officials and witnesses said.



A man walks through debris caused by the tidal wave that hit Kata beach in Phuket, Thailand, on Sunday. The most powerful earthquake in 40 years triggered massive tidal waves that slammed into coastlines across Asia on Sunday, killing more than 11,300 people in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, India, Malaysia and Thailand.

Deadly earthquake takes its toll on tourists in Thailand

BY TUTIN WANNABOVORN
The Associated Press

PHUKET, Thailand — Thousands of tourists were lazing on Thailand's renowned white sand beaches Sunday morning when an earthquake-driven tidal wave turned their tropical vacations into a holiday of terror, sweeping people, bungalows, boats and cars out to sea.

At least 289 people were killed and 3,675 injured by the rushing water, which struck at the peak of the tourist season when holiday-makers — especially from Europe — come to this Southeast Asian country to escape frigid winters.

The Health Ministry's disaster center has not issued numbers of foreigners among the victims, but according to media reports and the Thai Foreign Ministry tourists missing, injured or dead include nationals of South Korea, Japan, Germany, South Africa, Hong Kong, Britain, Denmark, Australia, Malaysia, Mexico, Russia, Sweden and the United States.

The toll might have been even higher, but the beaches were relatively uncrowded when the 16-to-33-foot waves struck around breakfast time. Many visitors were still sleeping off Christmas festivities when they heard shouting and screaming.

"Initially we just heard a bang, a really loud bang," said Gerrard Donnelly of Britain, a guest at Phuket island's Holiday Inn. "Then Emily, my wife, went out onto the balcony and people were just running."

"We initially thought it was a terrorist attack, then the wave came and we just kept running upstairs to get on as high ground as we could," he told Britain's Sky News.

"Suddenly this huge wave came, rushing down the beach, destroying everything in its wake," said Simon Clark, 29, a photographer from London vaca-

tioning on Ngai island with his girlfriend, Caroline Barton, 25, also of London.

The waves were triggered by a 9.0-magnitude undersea quake — the world's most powerful in 40 years — off the Indonesian island of Sumatra. The tidal waves struck as far away as India and Sri Lanka, where thousands died.

In Thailand, probably Asia's most popular holiday destination at this time of year, tourists desperate to leave the stricken islands were stranded by rough seas on well-known resort islands such as Phi Phi and Phuket.

The waves swept people trying to flee to higher ground off their motorbikes, and pushed cars down the streets like toys, witnesses said. But after the initial shock, there was little to do except observe the aftermath of nature's force.

On Phuket, Somborn Wagnanatham, deputy director of the Wachira Hospital, said one of the worst hit areas was the populous Patong beach, where at least 32 people died and 500 were injured.

One survivor was Natalia Moyano, 22, of Sydney, Australia, one of the 117 patients — including 29 foreigners — in Wachira Hospital following the disaster. She was being treated for torn ligaments.

"The water kept rising. It was very slow at first, then all of a sudden, it went right up," said Moyano. "At first I didn't think there was any danger, but when I realized the water kept rising so quickly, I tried to jump over a fence, but it broke."

The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok did not have an estimate for the number of American tourists in Thailand, or for those killed or injured Sunday.

"That's something the embassy is trying to track, but lots and lots of people are missing, and people who were killed were on the beach in swimsuits and didn't have ID on them," an embassy spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity.

Alisa Tang and Rungrawee C. Pinyorot of The Associated Press contributed to this report in Bangkok.

Quake: Tsunamis hit at least 7 countries

QUAKE, FROM PAGE 10

"All the planet is vibrating" from the quake, Enzo Boschi, the head of Italy's National Geophysics Institute, told Italian state radio.

He likened its power to a million atomic bombs the size of those dropped on Japan in World War II, and said the shaking was so powerful it even disturbed the Earth's rotation.

In India, the waves swept away boats, homes and vehicles, killing nearly 2,300 people.

Tamil Nadu's beaches resembled open-air mortuaries as fishermen's bodies washed ashore, and retreating waters left behind others killed inland. Sea water flooded the streets of Cuddalore town, flipping over dozens of cars and leaving some vehicles perched atop road dividers. At least 20,000 people were evacuated from the region, officials said.

At least 300 people were killed on India's Andaman and Nicobar islands, and another 700 were missing and believed dead, Press Trust of India cited the region's police chief as saying.

"I was shocked to see innumerable fishing boats flying on the shoulder of the waves, going back and forth into the sea, as if made of paper," said P. Ramanamurthy, 40, an Andhra Pradesh resident.

In Malaysia, at least 42 people, including foreign tourists swim-

Earthquakes' deadly toll

Earthquakes are one of the most deadly natural disasters and can claim lives by the thousands. The earthquake that hit Sunday has killed several thousand.

Deadly earthquakes, since 1902

DATE	LOCATION	DEATHS
1976	China	255,000
1920	China	200,000
1927	China	200,000
1923	Japan	143,000
1948	Turkmenistan	110,000
1908	Italy	70,000*
1932	China	70,000
1970	Peru	66,000*
1950	Iran	40,000*
1935	Pakistan	30,000*

*at least

SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey AP

ming or riding jetskis, were killed on the resort island of Penang, police and government officials said.

The force of the earthquake shook unusually far afield, causing buildings to sway hundreds of miles away, from Singapore to the city of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, and in Bangladesh, hours after the region's Christian communities had finished Christmas celebrations.



A vehicle lies on its side in front of a Starbucks shop after the area was hit by tidal waves at Patong beach in Phuket, Thailand, on Sunday.

European leaders call for aid for earthquake victims

BY FRANCES D'EMILIO
The Associated Press

ROME — Pope John Paul II appealed for swift international aid to help thousands of victims from Sunday's massive tidal waves that swamped coastal areas across southern Asia — triggered by the world's most powerful earthquake in 40 years.

During his customary Sunday noon appearance from his window overlooking St. Peter's Square, John Paul prayed for vic-

tims of the 9.0-magnitude quake near the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the resulting tidal waves.

The Christmas holiday has been saddened by the news that comes from Southeast Asia about the powerful earthquake which struck Indonesia, with consequences in other countries, including Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia and the Maldives.

"We hope that the international community acts to bring relief to the stricken populations," the pontiff said.

In Brussels, European Union Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Luis Michel said it was important to deliver aid "in those vital hours and days immediately after the disaster." The 25-nation EU will deliver \$4 million in emergency aid as a start.

British consular officials were called from vacation and aid efforts were being organized.

In Paris, French President Jacques Chirac sent a letter expressing his sympathy and the solidarity of France to the president of Sri Lanka, where some hundreds

were killed and a million others displaced by waves that slammed coastlines.

In Austria, relief officials and charities such as Caritas and Volkskirche issued broad and urgent appeal for cash donations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his condolences to leaders of India, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka.

German President Horst Koehler sent his condolences to leaders of the stricken countries and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said Germany was ready to offer aid.

IN THE STATES

Holiday air travel turns into nightmare

Computer glitch cancels Comair flights; US Airways loses track of piles of luggage

The Associated Press

HEBRON, Ky. — Days of bad weather, a computer malfunction and sick airline employees put tens of thousands of travelers in holiday limbo Saturday, with Comair canceling all its flights and US Airways trying to reconnect thousands of pieces of luggage with their owners.

Thousands of waiting passengers milled about at Comair's hub at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. At Philadelphia International Airport, several hundred people stood in long lines at sparsely staffed US Airways check-in counters and piles of suitcases were scattered throughout the baggage claim area.

On Sunday, Comair, a Delta Air Lines subsidiary, operated 110 to 165 flights, or 10 to 15 percent of its normal flight schedule, said Nick Miller, spokesman for the Delta subsidiary based at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport.

"We anticipate Comair will be able to operate on a full schedule by Wednesday," he said. "That is our goal."

Comair canceled all its 1,100 flights on Saturday because computer problems knocked out its system that manages flight assignments. The cancellations affected 30,000 travelers in 118 cities, he said.

"The situation is still pretty fluid. Our goal is to operate as many flights as possible," said Miller.

Comair's computer system that manages flight assignments crashed Friday night after it was overwhelmed by cancellations and delays caused by the winter storm that socked the Ohio Valley. The computer shut down forced the airline to cancel all of its Saturday flights.

Miller said technicians were continuing to repair the computer system.

"Obviously, we're working to get as much of the schedule back up and running," he said.

US Airways, meanwhile, had passengers



Luggage is piled up in the US Airways terminal at Philadelphia International Airport in Philadelphia on Friday.

and thousands of pieces of luggage stranded at Philadelphia International Airport — for the third day in a row.

Beary-eyed John Price watched Saturday as airport workers sorted piles of unclaimed bags — none of them the suitcase full of presents for relatives he had checked on his Phoenix-to-Philadelphia flight Friday.

"I can't show up empty-handed. That just doesn't cut it," he said.

The airline blamed the canceled flights — including 143 on Saturday — and baggage backups on severe weather Thursday

compounded by record numbers of employees calling in sick, according to a company statement.

Systemwide, the airline canceled 80 flights Saturday and 176 flights Friday, airline spokeswoman Amy Kudwa said.

Spokespeople for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which represents US Airways baggage handlers, and the Association of Flight Attendants said they had not organized any job actions.

"There is no union action. It's poor management planning, that's my opinion. ... We

have sick calls every single year around the holiday," said Teddy Xidas, president of Association of Flight Attendants Local 40 in Pittsburgh.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta has directed senior officials to talk with US Airways management about problems at the airport, Transportation Department spokesman Robert Johnson said Saturday.

Philadelphia is a US Airways hub, but the baggage backups extended to other East Coast airports.

In Virginia, hundreds of unclaimed bags from US Airways flights were piled at Richmond International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Shirley Malave flew from Philadelphia to Florida on Saturday to be with relatives, but when she arrived in Tampa she discovered her luggage wasn't on the US Airways plane with her. She waited for two more flights from Philadelphia, but her luggage was on neither.

"They ruined everybody's Christmas," said Malave, who lives near Tom's River, N.J.

She was offered a \$50 stipend to buy clothes, but on Christmas Day, "good luck trying to find something open," she said. "I have no clothes. Nothing."

Extra flights carrying nothing but luggage were scheduled to fly from Philadelphia to the airline's bag processing facility in Charlotte, N.C., where workers could help process bags more quickly, Kudwa said.

In Tampa and Miami, baggage delays on Delta flights also were reported. The airline did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Bruggling US Airways, bankrupt for the second time in two years, says it needs to drastically cut labor costs if it is to survive beyond mid-January, when its interim financing arrangement with the federal government's Air Transportation Stabilization Board is set to expire.

Strangers prevent Grinch from stealing Christmas

The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Pvt. Jeremiah Jensen, on leave from Iraq, had his car stolen at gunpoint just days before Christmas.

Pfc. Robert Ruiz was injured by a booby trap in Iraq a few days after Christmas last year.

For both Albuquerque soldiers, ill holiday fortune turned to hope and joy thanks to strangers who reached out to them this year.

Jensen, 21, drove 1,300 miles from Fort Campbell, Ky., to Albuquerque Dec. 18 to spend the holiday with his family. Four days later, his red 1996 Pontiac Grand Prix, loaded with Christmas gifts, was stolen outside a restaurant by a man who threatened Jensen and his girlfriend with a rifle.

Jensen had reduced the insurance on the vehicle while he was deployed and had not yet reinstated the coverage.

"I didn't know what I was going to do, honestly," Jensen told the Albuquerque Journal for a Saturday story. He must report back to Fort Campbell Jan. 4.

Sherriff Darren White, an Army veteran, took Jensen shopping Thursday evening to replace some of the stolen Christmas gifts.

"I told him, and this is really important, 'This is not an act of charity, it's an expression of gratitude,'" he said.

And the gratitude didn't stop there: When word

got out about Jensen's situation, automobile dealerships, restaurants and at least 25 individuals made donations totaling more than \$5,000 by Friday evening.

"We're going to raise enough money to buy him another car," White said. "This is vintage New Mexico and, really, what the spirit of Christmas is all about."

Ruiz, 28, is undergoing rehabilitation for injuries to his foot and back after he was injured last December by a booby trap while on patrol in Iraq.

A father of three, Ruiz wanted a motorcycle but he and his wife were buying a house and Andrea Ruiz said she wanted to save money.

"I finally gave in and just wrote (the local Harley dealer) to see if they had any financing options available," she said.

Dealership owner Chick Hancock said after learning of Ruiz's plight, he and his employees decided to get Ruiz a Harley for free.

"Here's a guy who is 28 years old with a wife and three kids who wanted to do right by our country," Hancock said.

Ruiz, wearing his dress uniform, limped into the Harley shop on Christmas Eve to see his customized, infantry blue Harley-Davidson Sportster and was greeted with applause.

"I told my dad I'd get a bike and we'd go riding together," Ruiz said. "I never expected anything like this."

Ice and snow hit the Carolinas hard

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Freezing rain and snow coated parts of the Carolinas on Sunday, knocking out power to thousands of customers and making highway slippery for after-Christmas shoppers.

A layer of ice one-quarter to one-half of an inch thick weighed down branches and power lines in South Carolina's Midlands and Pee Dee regions.

Progress Energy spokeswoman Julie Hans said 18,000 homes and businesses had no electricity in Florence and Hartsville, and South Carolina Electric and Gas said 7,100 of its customers were blacked out, mostly in the southeast area of Columbia.

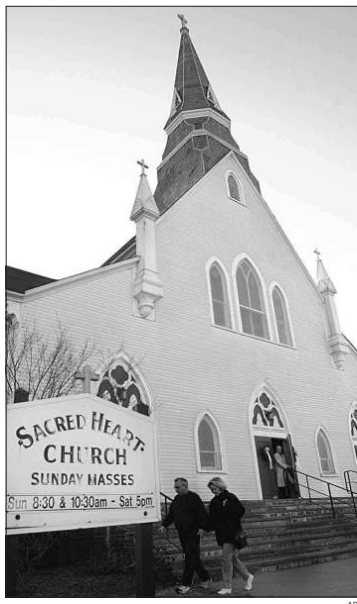
Up to four inches of snow had fallen by late morning in North Carolina's eastern Piedmont and northern Coastal Plain.

The North Carolina Highway Patrol road covering 14 central counties received reports of 180 accidents between midnight and about 10 a.m., more than five times the normal total for a regular Sunday, said patrol spokeswoman Patty McQuillan.

However, the cold and slippery roads didn't keep malls from opening in the Raleigh, N.C. area for shoppers looking for after-holiday bargains.

"We have the die-hard shoppers that are hitting the after-Christmas sales," said Pam Shaffer with Triangle Towne Center in North Raleigh. "It looks like they have a lot of bags in their hands."

Vigil to save church ends in arrests



Churchgoers leave Christmas Day Mass at the Sacred Heart Church in Natick, Mass., where on Christmas Eve two parishioners attempting to start a vigil at the church were arrested and charged with trespassing. The pair were protesting against the scheduled closing of the church.

Man, woman jailed over closing of 114-year-old Massachusetts parish

BY BOB SALSBERG

The Associated Press

NATICK, Mass. — Police arrested two parishioners who attempted a vigil to keep the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston from closing their 114-year-old parish, one of 83 churches slated to be shut down or consolidated by year's end.

Anne Green said she and Leo Ryan were handcuffed Christmas Eve at Sacred Heart Church, placed in the back of a cruiser and driven to Natick police headquarters, where they were booked on trespassing charges and briefly jailed.

They were released early Christmas morning with orders not to venture within 100 yards of the church, keeping them away from Christmas Mass on Saturday — a day before Sacred Heart is scheduled to shut down.

"This is not the way Catholics usually conduct their business. I never thought it would come to this," Green, 54, said Saturday.

She and several other parishioners had stayed in the church after the 6 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass. Late in the evening, two police officers told them to leave church or be arrested, and Green and Ryan declined.

Parishioners at eight other churches were continuing around-the-clock vigils to stave off the closures, which Archbishop Sean O'Malley announced last spring as part of a reorganization plan. The move was in response to declining attendance, a shortage of priests and financial pressure caused in part by the clergy sex abuse crisis.

Friday's incident in Natick is just the second time a church official has had a parishioner arrested amid the tension over church closures. A 69-year-old man was arrested after refusing to leave his closing parish in Winchester last month. Charges were eventually dropped.

Most parishioners arriving for Mass on Christmas morning called the incident unfortunate and sad.

"We were hoping it would be peaceful," said parishioner Paul Hegarty. "I have resigned myself to the fact that this church is closing. There is not enough people here who want to fight."

Of the parishioners who were arrested, Hegarty said, "God love them for trying."

O'Malley declined to answer questions as he left St. Francis House, a Boston homeless shelter, after helping serve Christmas dinner to residents.

"This is not the way Catholics usually conduct their business. I never thought it would come to this."

Anne Green

Mayer gets cold shoulder from alma mater

The Associated Press

FAIRFIELD, Conn. — Grammy Award-winner John Mayer returned to his alma mater to be inducted into its Hall of Fame — and wound up in the headmaster's office.

The 27-year-old guitarist and singer, a 1995 graduate of Fairfield Warde High School, decided to attend the induction ceremony but was barred because of what school officials said were security concerns. They said they had not expected the pop star to attend.

"We were not ready for John Mayer," said Jim Conley, chairman of the school's Hall of Fame committee.

Mayer said he was taken to the headmaster's office, where officials stalled him until the ceremony was under way and then walked him to his car.

"It was hurtful," he said Thursday.

Headmaster James Coyne said he explained to Mayer that he

was "concerned for his welfare and for the welfare of the students."

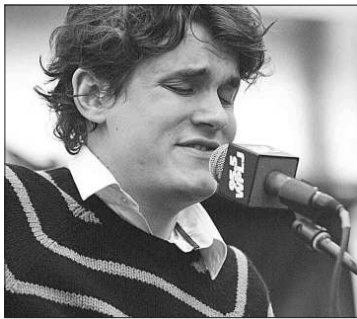
Coyne said the star wasn't escorted from the premises. "We accompanied him to his car."

Mayer said he initially was not able to attend the ceremony, but changed his mind. He said he intended to donate a guitar he used on tour.

As he approached James Blake, a professional tennis player who also was inducted with golfer J.J. Henry, a former teacher took Mayer by the arm and led him into Coyne's office, Mayer said.

"So there I was," Mayer said, "I could see James out there with his mom and the whole thing's going on and I'm in the office."

Mayer won a best male pop performance Grammy for the 2001 single "Your Body Is a Wonderland." This year, he's nominated in the same category and for song of the year for "Daughters," off his new album, "Heavier Things."



Singer John Mayer was barred from a Hall of Fame ceremony at his high school in Connecticut due to security concerns. Mayer said the incident was "hurtful."

Immigrant bill may be tough fight for Bush

BY TOM RAUM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush faces a major rebellion within his own party if he follows through on a promise to push legislation that would offer millions of illegal immigrants a path to U.S. citizenship.

Almost no issue divides Republicans as deeply. To get the guest-worker initiative through Congress, Bush will need to go against the wishes of many Republicans and forge bipartisan alliances. That's what President Clinton did in 1993 to win approval for a free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, over the objections of a large bloc of congressional Democrats.

The chance seems slim for finding common ground between those in favor of liberalized immigration laws — Bush, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, for example — and those who want fewer immigrants, tougher border controls and harsher penalties.

Opposition is strongest among House Republicans.

"In our party, this is a deep division that is grinding deeper every minute," says Rep. Tom Tancredo, R-Colo. He heads a group of 70 lawmakers who are against easing immigration laws.

Tancredo said Bush's guest-worker proposal is "a pig with lipstick" and will not pass.

Bush asserts that he is a valuable "political capital" in the election and intends to spend it. It is not clear how much of that he is willing to spend on the immigration measure.

Higher on his list of priorities is overhauling the Social Security system, rewriting the tax laws, limiting lawsuit judgments and making his first-term tax cuts permanent.

An estimated 10 million immigrants live in the United States illegally; the vast majority are from Mexico, with an additional million arriving every year.

A hint of the trouble ahead for Bush on immigration came this month when proposals to tighten — not ease — border restrictions nearly undermined a bill to restructure U.S. intelligence agencies.

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee wanted the measure to bar states from giving a driver's license to illegal immigrants.

The president's plan would grant temporary-worker status, for three years to six years, to millions of undocumented workers. It also would it easier for those workers to get permanent U.S. citizenship.

Republican consultants suggest Bush will not make a big push for his immigration bill until he has achieved his goals on Social Security and the tax laws. They also say the president may jettison the immigration bill if it would jeopardize other parts of his agenda.

Conservative students vs. liberal professors

Latest battle in college education turns around old campus conflicts

BY JUSTIN POPE

The Associated Press

BOSTON — At the University of North Carolina, three incoming freshmen sued over a reading assignment they say offended their Christian beliefs. In Colorado and Indiana, a national conservative group publicized student allegations of left-wing bias by professors.

Faculty at U.S. colleges have gotten hate mail and been pictured in mock "wanted" posters; at least one college said a teacher received a death threat.

And at Columbia University in New York, a documentary film alleging that teachers intimidate students who support Israel drew the attention of administrators.

The three episodes differed in important ways, but all touched on an issue of growing prominence on college campuses.

Traditionally, clashes over academic freedom have pitted politicians or administrators against instructors who wanted to express their opinions and teach as they saw fit. But increasingly, it is students who are invoking academic freedom, claiming biased professors are violating their right to a classroom free from indoctrination.

In many ways, the trend echoes past campus conflicts — but turns them around.

Once, it was liberal campus ac-

tivists who cited the importance of "diversity" in pressing their agendas for curriculum change.

Now, conservatives have adopted much of the same language in calling for a greater openness to their viewpoints.

Similarly, academic freedom guidelines have traditionally been cited to protect left-leaning students from punishment for disagreeing with teachers about such issues as American neutrality before World War II and U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Now, those same guidelines are being invoked by conservative students who support the war in Iraq.

To many professors, there's a new and deeply troubling aspect to this latest chapter in the debate over academic freedom: students trying to dictate what they don't want to be taught.

Those behind the trend call it an antidote to the overwhelming liberal dominance of university faculties. But many educators, while agreeing students should never feel bullied, worry that they just want to avoid exposure to ideas that challenge their core beliefs — an essential part of education.

Some educators also fear teachers will shy away from sensitive topics, or fend off criticism by "balancing" their courses with opposing viewpoints, even if they represent inferior scholarship.

"Faculty retrench. They are



AP photos

Professor George Wolfe, who teaches peace studies at the Peace Studies Center at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., was targeted in a complaint by a student who supported the war in Iraq and believes Wolfe is anti-American. The school's provost sided with Wolfe.

less willing to discuss contemporary problems and I think everyone loses out," said Joe Losco, a professor of political science at Ball State University in Indiana who has supported two colleagues targeted for alleged bias. "It puts a chill in the air."

Conservatives say a chill is in order.

A recent study by Santa Clara University researcher Daniel Klein estimated that among social science and humanities faculty members nationwide, Democrats outnumber Republicans by at least seven to one; in some fields it's as high as 30 to one. And in the last election, the two employers whose workers contributed the most to Sen. John Kerry's presidential campaign were the University of California system and Harvard University.

Many teachers aren't personal politics don't affect teaching.

But in a recent survey of students at 50 top schools by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a group that has argued there is too little intellectual diversity on campuses, 49 percent reported at least some professors frequently commented on politics in class even if it was outside the subject matter.

Thirty-one percent said they felt there were some courses in which they needed to agree with a professor's political or social views to get a good grade.

Leading the movement for the conservative viewpoint is the group Students for Academic Freedom, with chapters on 135 campuses and close ties to David Horowitz, a one-time liberal campus activist turned conservative commentator. The group posts student complaints on its Web site about alleged episodes of

grading bias and unbalanced, anti-American propaganda by professors — often in classes, such as literature, in which it's off-top.

Instructors "need to make students aware of the spectrum of scholarly opinion," Horowitz said. "You can't get a good education if you're only getting half the story."

Conservatives claim they are discouraged from expressing their views in class, and are even blackballed from graduate school slots and jobs.

the students lost their legal case, but the university no longer uses the word "required" in describing the reading program for incoming students (the plaintiffs' main objection).

In Colorado, conservatives withdrew a legislative proposal for an "academic bill of rights" backed by Horowitz, but only after state universities agreed to adopt its principles. Horowitz and backers of the academic bill of rights plan to introduce it in the Indiana legislature as well as in up to 20 other states.

At Ball State, the school's provost sided with Professor George Wolfe after a student published complaints about Wolfe's peace studies course, but the episode has attracted local attention.

At Columbia, anguished debate followed the screening of a film by an advocacy group called The David Project that alleged some faculty violated students' rights by using the classroom as a platform for anti-Israeli political propaganda (one Israeli student claimed a professor taunted him by asking, "How many Palestinians did you kill?"). Administrators responded this month by setting up a new committee to investigate students' complaints.

In the wider debate, both sides cite the guidelines on academic freedom first set out in 1915 by the American Association of University Professors.

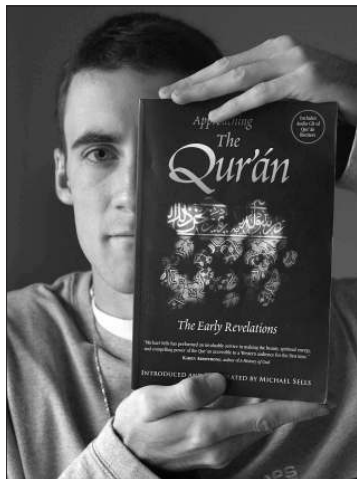
The students demanding greater conservative input emphasize the portion calling on teachers to "set forth justly ... the divergent opinions of other investigators." But many teachers note the guidelines also say instructors need not "hide [their] own opinions under a mountain of equivocal verbiage," and that their job is teaching students "to think for themselves."

In a recent survey of students at 50 top schools by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, 49 percent reported at least some professors frequently commented on politics in class even if it was outside the subject matter.

"I feel like [faculty] are so disconnected from students that they do these things and they can just get away with them," said Kris Wampler, who recently publicly identified himself as one of the students who sued the University of North Carolina. Now a junior, he objected when all incoming students were assigned to read a book about the Quran before they got to campus.

"A lot of students feel like they're being discriminated against," he said.

So far, his and other efforts are having mixed results. At UNC,



Kris Wampler, a University of North Carolina junior, holds a copy of "Approaching the Quran: The Early Revelations" in Chapel Hill, N.C. Wampler was one of the three students who sued the university in an effort to block the university's requirement that new students read the book about the Quran.

College Republicans' fund raising under fire

THOMAS B. EDSALL

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The College Republican National Committee is under fire for using front organizations to collect millions of dollars in contributions, including money from elderly people with dementia.

During the 2004 campaign, the group sent out direct mail solicitations under such letterheads as "Republican Headquarters 2004" and "Republican Election Committee."

One four-page letter asked prospects to send \$1,000 together with

an American flag pin for President Bush to wear to "Republican Headquarters" to ensure that Bush knows "there are millions who are giving him the shield of God to protect him in the difficult days ahead." In small print at the bottom of one page, the letter notes: "A project of and paid for by College Republican National Committee."

Many donors complained that they thought the money was going directly to the Republican Party, and not to the college group, which no longer is affiliated with the GOP. The controversy over the letters has produced angry re-

sponses from leaders of state College Republican chapters, including those in Washington state, North Carolina and New York. The University of Washington College Republicans approved a resolution calling on Eric Hoplin, chairman of the national committee, "to take full responsibility for his actions," acknowledge that those actions have substantially harmed the College Republicans grass-roots organization and "promptly resign."

Dan Centinello, New York College Republicans chairman, complained that the national leaders had not taken prompt and deci-

sive action to correct the situation. "I don't want to see the work of all of us be tarnished by a fundraising scandal," he said.

Internal disputes over fundraising tactics have been brewing among the College Republican groups for at least three years, but they surfaced in late October, after publication of damaging news reports in the Seattle Times and the Durham Herald-Sun.

The Times reported that a number of elderly donors gave far more money than they could afford. In the immediate aftermath, Hoplin e-mailed top state officials of the organization telling them

not to speak to the news media. "We need the story to go away," he wrote. "The story is full of lies and distortions written by a well-known liberal who is out to get us. If the press asks you about it, tell them you have no comment."

He told the Minneapolis Star Tribune, "We've come to discover that there are a few donors who have been confused, a few donors who have some form of dementia, who aren't entirely sure of the amount of money that they're giving — and how often they're giving." He said that any donors who believe they were misled will have their money refunded.



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2/11-2/28 MON-FRI

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10th Year
\$41,000
\$173
1/8-1/26 WED

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10th Year
\$54,000
\$491
1/3-1/31

SYDNEY/MELBOURNE
10th Year
\$55,000
\$500
1/10-1/31 PLEASE/AS SCHEDULE

BANGKOK
10th Year
\$48,000
\$436
1/10-1/31

DIRECT SINGAPORE
10th Year
\$38,000
\$345
1/10-1/23

DIRECT HONG KONG
10th Year
\$35,000
\$318
1/10-1/31 SUN-WED

SHANGHAI
10th Year
\$31,000
\$282
1/9-1/31

DENPASAR
Continental Airlines
10th Year
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\$198
1/2-1/31 SUN-THU

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1/11, 18, 25

CEBU 5days \$52,800~ (\$480)
1/11-31

BUSINESS CLASS

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1/10-1/31

SINGAPORE \$226,000 (\$2,055)
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LONDON, PARIS \$242,000 (\$2,200)
1/2-2/10

HONG KONG \$109,000 (\$991)
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BANGKOK \$155,000 (\$1,409)
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*Includes starting from these prices.
Japan Domestic Package available (Tokyo in advance).
Last minute booking OK!

HIROO



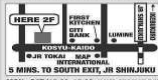
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NASA eyes parachutes to prevent jet crashes

BY TED BRIDIS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Rancher Albert Kolk's small plane banked uncontrollably in darkness over Canada's Monashee Mountains, then began spiraling toward earth. "Seat belts!" he barked to his teenage grandson and two young friends. Then he reached for a red lever in the cockpit.

Suddenly, an orange-and-white parachute as big as a house opened above the plane and gently landed his stricken aircraft in a rocky clearing.

If the maker of the parachute that saved Kolk's life this past spring succeeds, one day commercial aircraft like regional commuter jets may have similar safety systems. First, though, there's the challenge of creating a parachute robust enough to rescue bigger, faster planes.

"Weight and speed are always the challenge," acknowledged Robert Nelson, chairman of Ballistic Recovery Systems Inc., which sold about 500 of its \$16,000 parachute systems this year for use by small private planes and pilots like Kolk.

The company's most advanced parachute right now can accommodate nearly 4,000 pounds. While small planes can weigh up to 2,000 pounds and cruise about 175 miles per hour, regional jets weigh 80,000 pounds and fly at more than 600 miles per hour.

That's why Ballistic Recovery Systems is working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration — which gave it \$670,000 for research — to design a new generation of emergency parachutes that would work on small jets and could be steered by pilots as they drift to the ground.

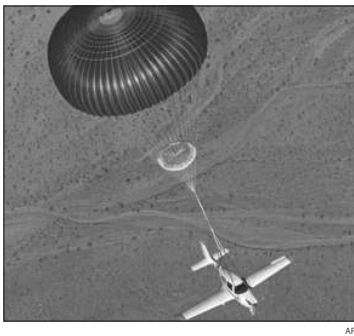
Kolk, who was piloting his private plane April 8 from Seattle to his ranch in British Columbia, remembered reaching for the parachute handle as his plane slipped into a dangerous flat spin over the mountains in British Columbia, "like how a dog chases its tail."

A seasoned pilot, Kolk said he had never experienced such a disaster in over a decade of private flying. "I knew I was in trouble, but couldn't straighten out," Kolk said. "When that chute opened, it was a peaceful, wonderful feeling."

Kolk's experience is one of four cases where parachute-equipped planes landed safely beneath a canopy since U.S. regulators approved the system six years ago. Recovery Systems, a Minneapolis-based firm, says eight lives were saved in those four incidents, plus dozens of other people in accidents involving smaller parachute-equipped ultralight planes that resemble motorized gliders.

The parachute, stored behind the rear seats in small planes, is fired with a rocket through the rear windshield; it's attached with high-strength lines to the plane's wings, nose and tail.

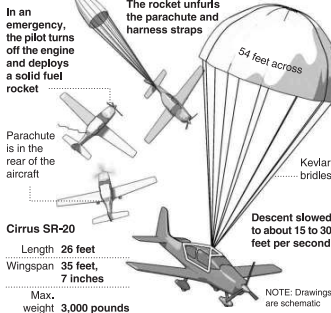
They are increasingly popular among private pilots, and for good reason: The government said 626



An emergency parachute system is deployed on a small private plane. The parachutes, used to save aircraft in distress, are increasingly popular among private pilots. Ballistic Recovery Systems Inc. believes the parachutes can be used on some commercial passenger jets.

Just a plane parachute

Ballistic Recovery Systems manufactures parachutes for small planes such as the Cirrus SR-20, and is working with NASA to design parachutes that could eventually work on larger planes.



Sources: Ballistic Recovery Systems Inc.; Cirrus Design Corp.

people died in general aviation crashes in 2003, compared with 81 people aboard commercial airlines.

Aviation experts question whether parachutes will ever be attached to the largest passenger jets, such as the Boeing 747, which weighs more than 900,000 pounds. "The speed and weight of those planes would seem to preclude a system like that," said James Hall, former chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board. Some private pilots insist they'll never fly without a parachute.

"People are crazy not to fly with them," said William Graham of San Diego, an instructor pilot whose plane landed beneath a parachute this spring near Stockton, Calif., after it unexpectedly flipped upside down at 16,000 feet. Graham, who was flying with his wife, Barbara, said they drifted onto a farm field so gently the landing didn't break fragile Christmas ornaments and glass bottles aboard the plane.

Stutter: Obesity a health risk even in active women

BY JANET MCCONNAGHEY

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Being fit but fat isn't good enough. Excess weight, all by itself, can take years off your life, even if you get plenty of exercise, a study found.

"There has been some suggestion that if you are particularly active, you don't have to worry about your body weight, about your diet. That's very misleading," said the report's lead author, Dr. Frank Hu of the Harvard School of Public Health.

The study of 116,500 women was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine and was based on questionnaires used in the Nurses' Health Study, which has followed female nurses since 1976, and on death certificates and medical records.

Women who were physically active but obese had almost twice the risk of death of women who were both active and lean.

Women who were sedentary but slender were 55 percent more likely to die early.

Women who were both sedentary and obese were almost 2½ times more likely to die.

"Being physically active did not cancel out the increased mortality of [being] overweight. Being lean did not counterbalance the risk effect of being sedentary," Hu said.

An editorial by David R. Jacobs Jr. and Mark A. Pereira of the University of Minnesota noted that the study relied on nurses' reports of exercise and weight rather than direct measurement, and did not include light to moderate exercise — the form most Americans get.

Dr. Timothy Church of the Cooper Institute, which is devoted to research on exercise and health, praised the findings.

"If you're lean but you're sedentary, don't fool yourself. You're still at risk. You need to get physically active," he said.

A separate study in the journal — the longest look yet at the effects of stomach-stapling and other obesity surgery — found that the weight loss and the protection against diabetes that result are major and long-lasting.

The Swedish study, led by Dr. Lars Sjostrom of Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Göteborg, looked at more than 4,000 people, about half of whom underwent surgery.

The other half were advised to change their habits, or got no treatment at all.

Two years later, the surgery group had lost about 23 percent of its original weight, while those in the comparison group weighed almost exactly the same.

Ten years later, the comparison group had gained an average of 1.6 percent. Those who underwent surgery had regained a larger percentage — but were still 16 percent below their original weights.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Japanese yen (Dec. 27)	102.80
South Korean won (Dec. 27)	1,020.00
Euro (Dec. 27)	\$1.91
Dollar buys (Dec. 27)	\$0.724
British pound (Dec. 27)	\$1.57

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (BHD)	0.377
British pound	\$1.914
Canada (CAD)	0.646
Denmark (Krone)	0.568
Egypt (Dollar)	0.224
France (Euro)	\$1.91
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.782
Hungary (Forint)	133.25
Indonesia (Korona)	6,925
Israel (Shekel)	1.836
Japan (Yen)	104.08
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.267
Norway (Krone)	6.194
Philippines (Peso)	56.08
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.75
Singapore (Dollar)	0.696
South Korea (Won)	1,020.00
Switzerland (Franc)	0.653
Thailand (Baht)	1.388
Turkey (Lira)	1,388,888.00

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Britain, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For commercial currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interlocking for all currencies except the British pound. All figures are for one dollar to one euro, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Tips for return success

The Associated Press

The nation's annual Trek to the Return Counter exercise is nearly here.

ConsumerReports.org, the online site of the popular consumer magazine, has a few tips to increase your chance of a happy resolution.

■ Arrive armed with a sales receipt. This is the swiftest method of slicing through initial confusion and smoothing the transaction.

■ Don't assume a clerk's no is the final word on the matter.

Take the issue to another employee, who may understand the store's return rules better (or worse) than the initial clerk. If all else fails, speak to the manager.

■ Don't discard tags or other product packaging until you're positive you'll keep the item. With some electronic items, doing so can result in a hefty return-sacking fee.

■ Above all: Be polite. Store clerks see the worst of humans' dealings with each other, so a smile and benevolent attitude always go a long way toward a satisfying experience.

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Mercile close	
Gold	\$440.30
Silver	\$6.93

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	3.25
Federal funds market rate	3.25
3-month bill	2.20
10-year Treasury note	4.25

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

FACES

SCARY Carrey

In his new magical movie, actor has fun putting fear into children of all ages

BY MIKE SZYMANSKI

Zip2it.com

LOS ANGELES — Jim Carrey loves scaring kids. He's played the Grinch in "Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas," the Riddler in "Batman Forever," the maniacal superhero in "The Mask" — and now he's the sinister Count Olaf in "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events."

"I remember when I was a kid just loving creepy movies that scared me and at the same time were funny," says Carrey. "I remember 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' with that ... Children Catcher, who was trying to entice kids out with candy and kidnap them. There were crazy characters that were really scary. Bill Sykes in 'Oliver!' — that's not a funny movie, but I love these characters."

Now he's recreating the nemesis of three orphaned children from a series of books that rivals "Harry Potter" in popularity. In the "Lemony Snicket" series, Olaf takes custody of the children and then tries to kill them in order to inherit their parents' fortune.

Carrey says in a press conference that he modeled the character after a little bit of Orson Welles, a bit of the cartoon cereal box character Count Chocula, and bit like a bird of prey. Physically, however, he turned out to be more familiar.

"I turned out looking like my dad, actually, which is really freaky," he says, pointing out that his family also noticed the resemblance of the older bald sharp-nosed Olaf.

"He's kind of like the funny uncle who gets a little drunk at Christmas and then turns in the middle of the night. I wanted the danger to be real."

For Carrey, playing dress-up is like Christmas every day. "I love transforming — it's like Christmas morning to me," he says, wearing an uncharacteristic black suit with a blue striped shirt. (He says he's going somewhere important

after the interview.) "You get into the make-up trailer and you start playing around with things and throwing pieces together. At one point, we had a Don King wig on backwards strapped to the back of my head and I look like a ... hood ornament from a Chevy, it was weird. But we experimented, we came up with 30 different characters that didn't get into the movie. The whole process is exciting. It's such a fun thing to masquerade, period."

"I remember when I was a kid just loving creepy movies that scared me and at the same time were funny."

Jim Carrey

Joining his masquerade in the film are Jude Law, Meryl Streep, Timothy Spall, Jennifer Coolidge, Cedric the Entertainer and British comedian Billy Connolly, who plays another distant relative who's a snake expert and always has a big huge python around his neck.

"Jim would always try to improvise something," Connolly recalls, remembering how in one scene Carrey picked up a snake-wrangling stick and putted around a piece of paper using live turtles as obstacles, as if on a miniature golf course. "It was just lovely to see his mind work that way and we all would collapse into laughter."

The children were played by "Road to Perdition's" Liam Aiken, Emily Browning from "Ned Kelly" and 2-year-old twins Kara and Shelby Hoffman, who alternated as the youngest child, Sunny. Browning says Carrey ate sardines and made his breath disgusting on purpose before shooting scenes with them.

"He always tried to crack us up, and scare us, too," Browning says. "Gosh, if they put all the outtakes together on the DVD, there'd be seven more hours of the movie."

Coming up, he's signed to do a big-screen version of "The Six Million Dollar Man," a remake of "Fun With Dick and Jane" and "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." His wide variety of character ranges represent two sides of himself.

"I think the two me's are definitely meeting in the middle in some respects. I seem to have tripped into a time in my career where I have such a diversity of roles, so I feel incredibly lucky."



Actor Jim Carrey hams it up at the premiere of "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events" in Hollywood on Dec. 12. Carrey plays creepy Count Olaf.

Powell takes coveted New Year position

Secretary of State Colin Powell will celebrate New Year's Eve in Times Square as the guest of honor at the 100th anniversary of the world-famous festivities.

Powell, a native New Yorker, will push the button to begin the New Year's Eve ball's descent as an expected 750,000 people swarm Times Square and more than a billion people world-wide watch on television.

"I could not imagine a better way to ring in the new year than surrounded by the energy and enthusiasm of the American people and those watching on television together in the hopes of a brighter tomorrow," Powell said in a statement.

Powell announced plans last month to resign from the Bush administration and plans to leave early next year.

"Colin Powell is as New York as you could possibly be," said Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who made the announcement Tuesday.

Royal wedding tapes profitable for charity

Proceeds from DVD sales of Prince Felipe's wedding have been donated to the families and victims of the Madrid train bombings.

A palace spokesman said Friday that \$230,375 had been sent to the Foundation for the Victims of Terrorism to be given to the victims of the March 11 attacks. Bombs tore through four early morning commuter trains in Madrid, killing 191 people and injuring some 1,800.

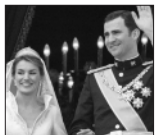
Prince Felipe and former TV anchorman Letizia Ortiz were married May 22. The wedding was filmed by Spanish Television with an agreement that proceeds from video sales be given to victims of the attack.

The foundation also represents victims of attacks by the armed Basque separatist group ETA, which has killed more than 800 people since 1968.

Actress breathes life back into Hepburn

Cate Blanchett comes on strong when she first appears as Katharine Hepburn in Martin Scorsese's new Howard Hughes biopic, "The Aviator." She's talking a mile-a-minute in that Hepburn accent.

Blanchett says Scorsese wanted it that way.



Ortiz and Prince Felipe

"He wanted Hepburn to come into the film with a bang. And so the scene is constructed with her talking her head off," she told AP Radio in an interview. "It's quite an assault on the senses."

Blanchett says Scorsese wanted the audience to ask themselves: "Oh, my God. Is that her? Is that Katharine Hepburn?"

"The Aviator" has received six Golden Globe nominations, including best supporting actress for Blanchett.

Smoking may hurt health but helps career

Smoking is bad for your health, but it was good for Hong Kong martial arts queen Yuen Qiu's acting career.

Yuen, who appeared in the 1974 James Bond film, "The Man With the Golden Gun," landed a role in "Kung Fu Hustle," which opened in Hong Kong on Thursday, because the director liked the way she smoked, the South China Morning Post reported.

Yuen, a popular stuntwoman and kung-fu actress in the '70s, said she was accompanying a friend to an audition when director Stephen Chow saw her smoking. He was looking for someone who smoked the way she did and urged her to join the cast, she told the newspaper.

Chow, who directed and starred in 2001's "Shaolin Soccer," asked her to play a landlady in his new comedy about gangsters who try to take over a neighborhood full of kung fu masters disguised as ordinary residents.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

TUESDAY EVENING / DECEMBER 28, 2004

MOVIES

SPORTS

J	6PM	6:30	7PM	7:30	8PM	8:30	9PM	9:30	10PM	10:30	11PM	11:30
6	AFN-P	ESPN News Pacific Report	NFL Football Philadelphia Eagles at St. Louis Rams. From the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis. (CC)						ESPN News Pacific Report	The Tonight Show (CC)		
7	AFN-AT	10:45 Oprah Winfrey (CC)	3:38 Guiding Light (CC)	1:17 General Hospital (CC)	Headline News Judge Judy (CC)	Today (CC)				12:59 The Tonight Show (CC)	Animaniacs (CC)	
8	NEWS	Hardball With Chris Matthews	The O'Reilly Factor (CC)	FOX News (CC)	FOX and Friends					American Morning		
9	SPORTS	10:45 NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced. (Taped)	NBA Fastbreak (CC)	4SportsCenter	College Football Motor City Bowl - Connecticut vs. Toledo. From Detroit.					ESPN News Auto Racing: FIA World Rally		
10	SPEC	The Simpsons Dude Where's My Ranch? (CC)	Everybody Loves Raymond Duke needs her space.	Star Trek: Enterprise "North Star" Rick discovers a planet with people living in an old West town. (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "Crash and Burn" An elderly woman crashes her car into a restaurant.	Jamie's Kitchen	Friends "The One With the Ride Along" (CC)	Seinfeld Highlights from the series. (CC)	The Daily Show	Blind Date (CC)		
11	AFN-H	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rugrats (CC)	The Proud Family Amanda	Everwood "Everwood Confidential" (CC)	Sister, Sister (CC)	Sister, Sister (CC)	The Cosby Show Home Improve.	Touché by an Angel (CC)			
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58	ATM	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show
59	ATM	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show
60	ATM	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show	10:45 The Tonight Show

JAPAN TV

Afternoon

12:30 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (12/9)

1:30 U.S. Movie (1976): King Kong (2001) (12)

Evening

6:30 NHK News (6)

7:00 NHK News (1)

7:30 What I Like About You (3)

10:00 News (13)

1:20 French Drama: Fabio Montale: Chourou (1)

JAPAN TV-B57

Morning

6:15 World News Hour

7:15 World News Hour

8:15 World News Hour

9:15 World News Hour

10:10 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (6): Ichiro (12) (12/10)

11:15 CNN News

12:15 CNN News

2:15 PBS NewsHour

3:15 CNN News (6)

4:15 World News Hour

5:15 Asian News

Evening

6:15 CNN News

7:15 News Today Asia

8:15 News Today World

9:15 Economic News

9:30 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (3): Hideki Nomo

11:15 NFL: Philadelphia Eagles vs. St. Louis Rams

2:15 Asian News

3:20 Football Mundial

7:40 World Amazing Sports

8:15 Asian News

9:15 World News Hour

JAPAN TV-B511

Morning

10:00 Cartoon

Afternoon

2:45 News Movie (1992): Lotta Pa Brak-makargatan (12/9)

Evening

7:00 NHK News

7:55 U.S. Movie (1990): The Rocket (2/26)

12:45 U.S. Movie (1986): Cheyenne Autumn (2/40)

WOWOW

Morning

11:30 U.S. Movie (1997): My Best Friend's Wedding (1/50)

Afternoon

1:20 U.S. Movie (2002): Red Dragon (2/10)

2:30 UEFA Euro 2004 Soccer: Quarterfinal: Czech vs. Denmark

Evening

6:00 U.S. Movie (2003): Daredevil (1/57)

8:00 U.S. Movie (2003): 2 Fast 1 Furious (1/50)

9:00 U.S. Movie (2003): Ring of the Caribbe-an: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2/30)

12:30 French Movie (1960): Piretella (1/20)

2:00 British U.S. Movie (2002): Die Another Day (2/15)

4:15 TV Series: Sex and the City

4:30 TV Series: Sex and the City

4:50 TV Series: Sex and the City

MTV

Morning

6:00 Wake Up

7:00 U.S. Movie

8:00 Top Choice

10:00 Pure Music

10:30 Classic

10:30 All the Best of MTV 2004 No. 13-14

Afternoon

12:00 All the Best of MTV 2004 - Ashlee Simpson No. 3-10, 4

1:00 All the Best of MTV 2004 - Pimp My Ride No. 3-10, 4

2:00 All the Best of MTV 2004 Punk'd No. 3-10, 4

3:00 Movie Awards 2004

6:00 U.S. Movie

7:00 World Cinema: Power Powered by Honda

8:00 MTV's Diary in Hollywood

9:00 VMA Miami Style: Rene & Maria

10:00 U.S. Movie

11:00 World Selection

12:30 Pure Music

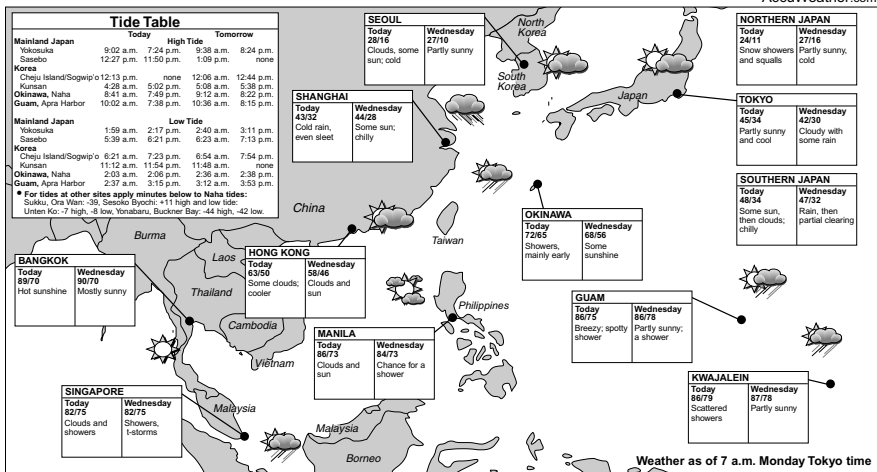
12:00 Top Choice

1:00 MTV's Ashlee Simpson

The Pacific Forecast

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Extended Forecasts

TOKYO Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 36, low 23. Friday: Clouds and sunshine, high 40, low 36.	KADENA Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 62, low 56. Friday: Clouds and sunshine, high 66, low 55.	SEoul Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 19, low 5. Friday: Partly sunny, high 23, low 10.	MANILA Thursday: Showers, high 86, low 73. Friday: Showers, high 87, low 73.	HAGATNA Thursday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 88, low 82. Friday: Clouds and sunshine, high 88, low 79.
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Sunday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	51/28	Los Angeles	61/50
Amarillo	54/29	Little Rock	49/26
Anchorage	21/13	Louisville	35/14
Ashville	43/20	Miami	71/52
Baltimore	34/23	Milwaukee	22/12
Birmingham	49/24	Nashville	40/20
Bismarck	19/12	New York	31/23
Boise	45/30	Omaha	29/21
Boston	29/19	Orlando	57/38
Brownsville	64/44	Philadelphia	34/26
Buffalo	22/9	Phoenix	70/48
Burlington	17/7	Pittsburgh	27/14
Charleston, SC	41/28	Portland, OR	49/39
Charlotte	42/22	Portland, ME	24/16
Cleveland	25/14	Salt Lake City	42/28
Columbus, OH	27/12	St. Louis	39/20
Duluth	17/1	San Antonio	64/34
El Paso	55/30	San Diego	64/52
Hartford	27/22	San Juan	83/72
Helena	37/15	Tampa	56/38
Indianapolis	29/9	Washington	58/34
Jacksonville	47/30	Wichita	34/22
Kansas City	40/27		

Tuesday, December 28



U.S. Extended Forecast

Much of the country east of the Rockies will be dry Tuesday with only a few flurries around the Great Lakes. A strong storm will continue to impact California with heavy rain and mountain snow Tuesday, and this will continue right through the middle part of the week as this storm sits and spins just off the California coast. The rain and snow may extend northwest into Washington and Oregon by Thursday as well. Much of the country east of the Rockies will have above-normal temperatures by Thursday with rain possible all the way into the Upper Midwest by late Thursday.

Tuesday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	89/70	Iwakuni	48/32
Beijing	22/14	Kadena AB	72/65
Camp Casey	27/14	Kansan AB	34/19
Christchurch	68/52	Kewlekin	86/79
Diego Garcia	86/77	Manila	86/73
Hagatna	86/75	Misawa AB	30/15
Hanoi	61/48	Osan	28/16
Hong Kong	83/60	Perth	88/68
Honolulu	80/67	Pusan	39/26

Tuesday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	88/71	Budapest	38/28	Kabul	36/16
Athens	61/43	Buenos Aires	80/62	Kiev	40/30
Auckland	73/58	Cairo	76/57	Oslo	29/20
Baghdad	64/41	Cancun	76/64	London	43/36
Barbados	85/69	Cape Town	83/65	Madrid	44/35
Barcelona	46/34	Geneva	29/24	Mexico City	65/44
Berlin	34/23	Istanbul	55/47	Montreal	22/18
Bermuda	60/48	Jerusalem	64/48	Mogadishu	92/76
Brussels	36/27	Johannesburg	84/55	Moscow	34/20
				Warsaw	35/25



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Flu shots available

MA BOSTON — State health officials are making flu vaccine shots available to people 50 and older. The state imposed restrictions in October after British regulators unexpectedly shut down a major U.S. vaccine supplier over concerns about bacterial contamination. In early December, with supplies increasing, the Department of Public Health lowered the minimum age to 65 and eased some other restrictions.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dude, we want Dell Inc.

NC WINSTON-SALEM — The city and surrounding Forsyth County proposed giving a combined \$37.2 million to Dell Inc. if it builds a computer plant there. Dell could hire more than 2,000 workers for its new Triad plant. Guilford and Davidson counties have offered lower incentive deals. Dell announced last month it would move to the region after the Legislature agreed to incentives totaling \$242.5 million.

Hazards of watching TV

TX HOUSTON — A car plowed into an apartment and ran over a man who was lying in bed watching television, but the man suffered only minor injuries.

Wilmon Guillory, 56, was trapped under the car for 40 minutes. He was treated and released from Memorial Hermann Hospital, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Firefighters said three young people were in the car that plunged through a brick wall of Guillory's apartment and into his bedroom. All three fled.

Home's nurse attacked

CA PERRIS — An 87-year-old man visiting a family member at a convalescent home allegedly shot a nurse in the face after he became angry about the care the relative was receiving, authorities said.

The nurse was listed in critical condition at a nearby hospital, Riverside County sheriff's spokesman Dennis Gutierrez said.

Minutes after the afternoon shooting at the Ember Care Health Center in Perris, authorities arrested Norman Larson of Sun City for investigation of assault with a deadly weapon, Gutierrez said.

Center employees had detained Larson by the time deputies arrived.

Baby suit thrown out

SC COLUMBIA — The state Supreme Court threw out a "wrongful life" lawsuit claiming a doctor failed to tell a pregnant woman about her son's severe birth defect.

Jennie Willis contended she would have legally aborted had she known when she was pregnant that most of her son's brain was missing, according to her lawyer, S. Fayette Furr Jr. The lawsuit was filed by Willis on behalf of her now 8-year-old son, Thomas.

In a unanimous ruling, South Carolina's high court said it recognizes the severe nature of the boy's

condition, but it could not accept the wrongful birth claim.

South Carolina joins 27 other states that either reject or limit the "wrongful life" claim, the court said. California, Washington and New Jersey are the only other states that allow such claims.

YMCA rentals banned

IL CHICAGO — A YMCA director has been fired and overnight facility rentals banned after the parents of young children arriving for a morning swim meet clashed with participants in an overnight transgender fashion show and ball.

Greg Weider, who had been acting director of the New City YMCA for two years, was fired. Programming manager Michael Horton, who oversaw scheduling at the center, resigned two days earlier.

Police and private security guards were called after some parents used sexual slurs, and scuffling broke out, authorities said. No arrests were made.

Cyclists defend rights

NY NEW YORK — The city's bid to force cyclists to obtain permits before their monthly bicycle rally through Manhattan was dismissed by a federal judge.

U.S. District Judge William H. Pauley III said the issue should be

resolved in state court.

Cyclists had argued that since no one claims to organize the Critical Mass rallies, issuing permits would have been difficult.

City lawyer Sheryl Neufeld said the city was considering an appeal.

The bike rides, which started in San Francisco in 1992 to make a statement about cyclists' rights, have become large enough in New York that police tightened the rules, leading to the arrest of hundreds of cyclists days before the Republican National Convention.

Pauley noted that police had not required permits for nearly a decade and had even aided the rallies by blocking cross-town intersections and letting cyclists run red lights.

Attorney Norman Seagal, who represented five cyclists who had their bikes seized, said he hoped the judge's argument "will deter the city from seeking to appeal."

Saving trees

NE HASTINGS — When Earl Marian sends birthday wishes to his brother, he can count on getting the same early birthday wishes from Floyd Marian the next month.

It's a card-swapping tradition that started in 1975, when Floyd first received the birthday card from his brother.

In it, Linus of the Peanuts comic strip tells the reader, "This is the age of ecology! Don't throw this card away. Recycle it to a friend." Floyd took the advice and sent it back to Earl. Earl followed suit the following year. And so on and so on.

For 29 years the brothers have kept their same-card exchange going, freshening the card up with one-line messages that now have taken up most of the card's open space.

Floyd, 80, receives the card each year around his Dec. 10 birthday, then kicks it back to Earl, 73, in time to acknowledge his birthday on Jan. 31.

"It's getting worn out a little bit," Floyd said.

Drivers' licenses revoked

VA RICHMOND — A total of 237 drivers are losing their Virginia licenses because of suspected fraud by a former Department of Motor Vehicles worker who allegedly sold driver's licenses for up to \$2,500 each.

The department will be mailing letters containing the cancellation orders to the drivers this week, with the revocations effective immediately.

All the drivers received licenses over the last 1½ years from a former DMV employee at the agency's office in north Henrico County who has been charged with illegally selling documents.

Two weeks ago, the agency sent letters to 250 drivers telling them to turn in their licenses and reapplies for them.

An unknown number of the 250 affected drivers turned in their licenses, she said, but could not meet the state's licensing requirements and walked away without a new driver's license.



On a mission Salva Dut shows a water pump he uses for demonstrations of his mission to bring clean water to villages in Sudan, at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church where he works as a clerk in Rochester, N.Y. Dut is one of the thousands of "Lost Boys of Sudan" who spent over a decade fleeing war and famine before landing in America.



Soup's on Glenn Harris, left, gets chicken soup from Kim Snyder, second right, and sandwiches from Patricia Bates, right, as members of Gods Filling Station Full Gospel Church serve meals to the needy in front of the Department of Social Services building in Asheville, N.C.



Protesters on the prowl Lisa Franzetta, campaign coordinator with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, left, and Melissa Garcia, a volunteer with PETA, protest as they skate around wearing painted-on leopard spots Pershing Square's downtown ice rink in Los Angeles.



Snack time

Pike, a 22-year-old polar bear, digs into a Christmas present at the San Francisco Zoo in San Francisco on Christmas Eve.



3 lucky pigs Three hogs walk in the snow after getting out of a barn that caught fire near Stockwell, Ind. More than 500 head of hogs were in the barn. Some of the hogs were able to be saved. Fire officials would not say what the cause of the blaze was.



Back on track A car of the newly reopened Las Vegas Monorail pulls into the station at the MGM Grand. The brand-new system, built by Canada's Bombardier Corp., had been closed since mid-September due to safety concerns.



Winter-sun run Octavio Pescador runs along the beach in Santa Monica, Calif., on Christmas Eve, with temperatures near 70 degrees.



Night lights Shining through the pitch-black darkness of an early winter morning, Christmas lights cover this home in Shawnee, Okla.

New low on welfare

MD ANNAPOLIS — Figures from the Maryland Department of Human Resources show the number of people in Maryland receiving welfare benefits last month was 66,725. That's the lowest number since December 1963. Officials say the numbers have fallen steadily since a 1996 federal law limited the duration of benefits.

Road projects delayed

AL MONTGOMERY — Newspaper mistakes in advertising state highway construction projects have delayed road projects five times since late 2003 and cost the state \$202,354, state transportation officials said. State law requires the projects to be advertised once a week for three weeks before bids are opened. If not, the bid process must start over.

\$5M in child support

MI LANSING — Attorney General Mike Cox said his office has collected \$5 million in back child support collections. The office collected \$5 million between July and December, the same amount it collected between April 2003 and this July, a Cox spokesman said. The number of workers dedicated to collecting back child support has been increased from 10 to 33.

No more discount

NJ TRENTON — Motorists who use E-ZPass on the New Jersey Turnpike will lose their 15 percent discount for rush hour and weekend tolls beginning Jan. 1, 2006. The move is expected to generate as much as \$17 million and will allow officials to borrow more money for highway improvements without paying higher interest rates. Toll discounts during off-peak hours will remain in effect.

Vandals taint landmark

WV HARPERS FERRY — Vandals marked a popular landmark that Thomas Jefferson called one of nature's "most stupendous scenes," defacing with paint a famous rock of shale known as Jefferson Rock.

The rock, offering a sweeping view of where the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers meet in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, was damaged in the evening or early morning. "It looks like the entire park was dipped into paint," park Superintendent Donald W. Campbell said Thursday. No arrests had been made.

Jefferson hiked to the spot in 1783 and described it as "perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature" in his book "Notes on the State of Virginia," telling readers its scenic vista was "worth a voyage across the Atlantic."

Park officials have begun to remove the oil-based paint from the well-grooved slab with chemicals.

3 arrests in bird caper

IL DECATUR — Authorities charged three men in connection with the decapitation of birds at Decatur's Scovill Zoo, saying they urged a 15-year-old to break into the zoo on Halloween

and helped cover up the crime.

Police released documents that described it as a theft attempt gone awry. They said the teenager, arrested last month, had been urged by the three to steal chickens from the zoo on Oct. 31.

The following day, zoo workers found two Chilean flamingoes and a white pelican mangled in their cages.

Chief Park Ranger Ward Davis said authorities believe the teen went after the birds after being unable to find any chickens. In court documents, authorities said the 15-year-old strangled and decapitated the flamingoes and stomped on the pelican before decapitating it. The case against the teen is pending.

Sean M. Riley, 26, Lloyd G. Pringle, 19, and Brandon Gossard, 19, were arrested in connection with the bird deaths. Park officials say the community has raised more than \$14,000 to replace the birds.

Pink slips at meatpacker

KS WICHITA — A Kansas meatpacker, hit by the loss of lucrative export markets because of fears of mad cow disease in American beef, is cutting 150 jobs and reducing production at its slaughterhouse.

Creekestone Farms Premium Beef blamed its inability to do the kind of testing for mad cow, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), that would appease overseas customers.

"What we predicted has happened — that is, we are not able to ship because we are not testing. We are not doing what the customer wants. We continue to think that is wrong," said Bill Fielding, Creekestone's chief operating officer.

One year ago, the nation's first case of mad cow was discovered in a single animal in Washington state. Many nations, including Japan — with sales exceeding \$1 billion in 2003 — then closed their borders to U.S. beef imports.

Creekestone Farms wanted to test the cattle it slaughters for the disease. The Department of Agriculture has refused to allow such comprehensive testing.

Traffic dispute escalates

RI LINCOLN — A Woonsocket man was restrained at gunpoint by a state Department of Environmental Management officer after a traffic dispute.

Stephen Chauvin, 24, was charged with felony assault with a dangerous weapon. The DEM officer spotted him walking from his parked car toward another motorist with a 2-foot-long retractable baton on Route 116 shortly after 9 a.m.

Chauvin and the other driver had both pulled over to the side of the road.

The DEM officer witnessed the confrontation and ordered Chauvin to put the baton down. When he failed to comply, the officer drew his weapon.

Chauvin then stopped and was later charged by police.

Police said Chauvin was carrying the baton because he uses it in his job as an armored-car driver, The Providence Journal reported in Thursday's editions.

Chauvin appeared in District Court and was released on personal recognizance.

His next court date is Jan. 4.

Stories and photos from news wires

Horoscope

Venus runs out ahead of Mercury, and our hearts take the lead over our logical brain. So if you already know you have a tendency to have a fool for love, this is the time to ask friends what they honestly think—before you make any rash decisions. On the brighter side, if you've been finding it hard to forgive someone, compassion wins out.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 28). You've got head-turning style this year—ah, that, along with your creativity and hard work, will get you rave reviews. Don't let it go to your head, however, particularly in April, when opportunity springs from humility. Your larger-than-life intensity attracts love that is the same in June. Be thrifty, and you'll have a good deal to spend in September.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Sweet harmony guides your day as you reach an accord with your wife, your mother or a maternal figure and go to your neutral corners. Now, you can be super-productive and whip through that to-do list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Have a chat with the gardener, the hairdresser or someone else who grooms you or your home—but wait until after noon. You'll be better able to articulate your needs, and that person will be more receptive to your suggestions.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Every song on the radio will seem to speak directly to you. This is a prolific time for Gemini poets, songwriters and romantics. Words of love roll easily off the tongue—or out of the pen if you prefer.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There is a light at the end of this tunnel! You feel a surge of confidence as you glimpse it. Any unfinished business can be completed. Messes can be cleaned up. You're capable of more than you previously thought.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The drama increases on your life stage, and you may feel as if you're flying

without a net. Rest assured that a stabilizing force will protect you from any rough landings. The universe has got your back.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're liable to feel a bit irked by someone, particularly if that person throws your daily routine out of whack. Stall for time. If you still feel the same way in a couple of hours, share your concerns.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Use your natural sense of fair play to mediate a discussion between folks taking pro and con positions. You'll come out looking like a hero as long as you stay neutral. Another Libra helps.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Others are drawn to you by your passion and mystery, but be careful of their motives. Your intuition is in high gear right now, so if something feels fishy, make a call to your gut, and go with whatever it has to say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Passion is on the menu, as is a taste for telling it like it is. You express your affection with flair and wit. Teachers, lawyers and politicians can win over the other side by making their case with enthusiasm.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your family is your strength, and you are theirs. Reminiscent about the past fills your heart with tenderness and love. A nice dinner can do wonders for your spirit. Include at least two of your favorite comfort foods.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Social butterfly that you are, you're probably spreading yourself too thin. Your torn between focusing on your own needs and keeping a commitment you made to a friend. Sleep in late tomorrow if you possibly can.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The focus is still on your relationship, but now, the perspective has shifted from your partner to you. You're a natural-born negotiator, so say what you really feel, and try to find common ground. It's closer than you realize.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



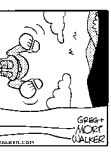
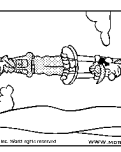
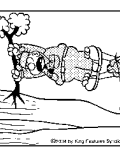
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Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



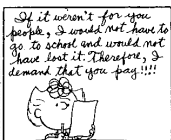
Red Rover

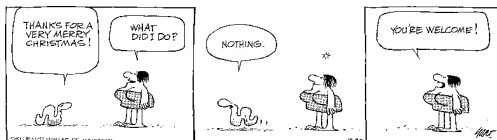
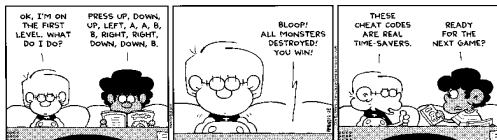


Better or Worse



Peanuts





Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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51				52				53		

Across

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Chatters away | 53 Abound | pay |
| 5 Unclear image | | 24 Cronies |
| 9 Clothing | Down | 26 Earth |
| protector | 1 Guy's partner | 27 Wine cask |
| 12 Jai | 2 Stout relative | 28 Mysterious character |
| 13 Croupier's prop | 3 Munich's st. | |
| 14 A Gabor sister | 4 Nap | 29 Pack away |
| 15 Brought with | 5 Pesky kid | 31 Attorney's hires |
| borrowed money | 6 Trails the pack | 34 Frenzied |
| 17 Doggy doc | 7 Guitar's kin | 35 Miss Piggy's love |
| 18 Collections | 8 "Quiz Show" | |
| 19 Skin | director | 37 Capek drama |
| 21 Mails | 9 Drinks | 38 Snatch |
| 24 Needy | 10 Currier's partner | 39 Garage job |
| 25 Notion | 11 Business loss | 40 Revlon rival |
| 26 1977 movie hit | 12 Thing, in law | 41 Apportion |
| 30 Thanksgiving abbr. | 20 Despondent | 45 Praiseful word |
| 31 Knew how to | 21 Ricochet sound | 46 Caviar |
| | 22 Stench | 47 Shade source |

Down

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Guy's partner | 27 Wase cask |
| 2 Stout relative | 28 Mysterious |
| 3 Munich's st. | character |
| 4 Nap | 29 Pack away |
| 5 Pesky kid | 31 Attorney's hirs |
| 6 Trails the pack | 34 Frenzied |
| 7 Guitar's kin | 35 Miss Piggy's |
| 8 "Quiz Show" | love |
| director | 37 Capek drama |
| 9 Drinks | 38 Snatch |
| 10 Courier's | 39 Garage job |
| partner | 40 Revlon rival |
| 11 Business loss | 41 Apportion |
| 16 Thing, in law | 44 Mound stat |
| 20 Despondent | 45 Praiseful work |
| 21 Ricochet sound | 46 Caviar |
| 22 Stench | 47 Shade source |

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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					G	M	A		L	A	U	N	C
		O	S	H	E	A		P	I	N	T		
E	N	O	S		B	I	G	D	E	A	L		
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		B	A	W	N		P	I	X	E	L		
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12-28

CRYPTOQUIP

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Z A X D U O L V X Y X H X I A
D Y X O O H O V U Z G A D X Y Y A B

X Y X G J C Y A X B A C .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE SELLING CHRISTMAS TREES, YOU MIGHT TRY AND GET YOURSELF ALL SPRUCED UP.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals S

Little privacy in hospital gowns

Dear Abby: In reply to the letter from "Offended in the South," regarding hospital gowns, I understand a person's need for modesty. However, I am a health-care provider, and I see the other side of the picture. As a paramedic, we are constantly disrobing patients (including cutting clothing off) to gain access to areas that need examination and treatment. Hospital gowns give us access to IV lines, EKG monitoring, and defibrillation and other medical equipment.

I am always conscious of my patients' need for privacy and re-cover them after I have examined them. Hospitals do provide robes for patients that cover their backsides.

I encourage all hospital patients to request a robe because the hospital gown they receive upon admission.

—Khrystyn, Port Edwards, Wis.
Dear Khrystyn: I'm sure many readers will be interested to know that such garments are available upon request. Read on:

Dear Abby



Some years back, I was in a hospital that offered a unique hospital gown. It was extremely large and had three sleeves. The patient put the left sleeve over the left arm, the right sleeve over the right arm, and then the gown was passed around the back, and the third sleeve placed over the left arm again. I remember my entire body was covered and I was very comfortable. I wish I could recall the name of that hospital.

—H.E. in Florida

Dear H.E.: It's nice to know that such a garment exists, but

how practical can it be for examinations or other emergency procedures?

Dear Abby: Five years ago, I had the same complaint as "Offended." I am 6 feet tall and weigh 225 pounds. For years I complained to the doctors about the fact that the gowns were so short. Finally, I went to the fabric store and bought two yards of fabric and a pattern for a wrap-around sundress. The total cost was \$12.95. I made it long — about 8 inches below my knee — and carried it with me in a tote bag.

—Marce in Houston

Dear Marce: That's a practical solution for a person who's handy with a needle — the sewing kind, that is.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uepress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NACAL

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FOOLI

YONIFT

REMPIT

www.jumble.com

Answer:

Answer:

Answer:

Answer:

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argentin



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon. (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: KNAVE DITTY GAITY SPONGE
Answer: What the cook concentrated on in history class — GETTING "DATES"

Move stressful, but give it a chance

Dear Annie: I have been married for 25 years and love my husband dearly. Three months ago, "Nelson" was offered a good job in Maryland. However, it meant we had to move five hours from my mother and grand children, and it is tearing me apart. I thought I would be able to handle the distance, but I can't.

My daughter is now separated from her husband, and I feel I should be there for her and the children. My husband has said that if I am so unhappy, he will give up the job and we will move back. But, Annie, I know that he is enjoying his new position, and I don't want to make him move.

I am depressed. I cry a lot. I have gotten a job in a large office, but I still am lonely for my family and friends. I said I would give it a year, but it is so much harder than I thought.

Dear N.Y.: Of course it's hard to move away from the home you've known and the family you

Annie's Mailbox



cherish. Moving is highly stressful under the best of circumstances. However, you need to give Maryland a chance.

Maryland is not that far away from New York. Can you save up mileage so you can visit your daughter perhaps one weekend a month (more often if you can afford it)?

Have you joined a church or synagogue where you can become involved in its activities? Does your new apartment, condo or neighborhood have a social committee? These efforts will provide a distraction from your unhappiness and allow you to make new friends. Please hang in there a little longer before giving up.

Dear Annie: I was raised not to make noise when I eat. I don't smack, crunch or chew with my mouth open.

I realize some foods make noise, like crackers or cucumbers, but in my group of friends,

there is a woman who crunches the ice in her drink. This is like nails on a blackboard to the rest of us. The subject has been brought to her attention, but she told us in no uncertain terms that she liked to crunch ice and doesn't plan to stop.

We realize this is not an earth-shaking problem, just an annoying one. Now what do we do, other than dissolve the group get-together, which we really don't want to do? Earplugs?

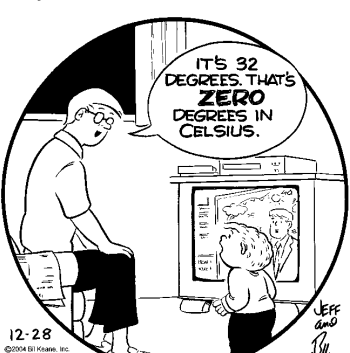
—Deafened in South Carolina

Dear S.C.: Your friend may have an iron deficiency. One of the symptoms is the desire to crunch ice. Really. Tell her you are worried about her health and suggest she talk to her doctor. Beyond that, there's not much you can do to dissuade her from crunching. If she is too inconsiderate to stop when asked, you might want to avoid including her in these outings.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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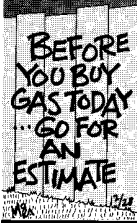
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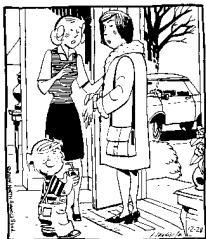
12-28
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"Br! I wouldn't want to live in Celsius!"

GRAFFITI



Dennis the Menace



"Yeah, Mom really loved your gift, but not as much as what she exchanged it for."

© Gary Larson

The Far Side



"Varmints! ... You're all just a bunch of cheatin' varmints!"

Non Sequitur





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SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Tuesday

AFN Sports 3 p.m.-College football: ESPN College GameDay.

AFN Sports 4 p.m.-College football: MGP Computers Bowl, Fresno State vs. Virginia Tech.

AFN Sports 7:30 a.m.-College football: Detroit Lions vs. Toledo vs. Cincinnati.

AFN Sports 7:30 a.m.-NFL: ESPN NFL Monday Night Countdown.

AFN Sports 11 a.m.-NFL: Philadelphia at St. Louis (radio).

AFN Sports 5 p.m.-NBA: New York at Orlando.

AFN Sports 7:30 p.m.-NFL: Philadelphia at St. Louis (radio).

AFN Sports 11:30 a.m.-College football: City Bowl, Toledo vs. Connecticut at Detroit (radio).

Wednesday

AFN Sports 3 a.m.-NFL: Philadelphia at St. Louis (radio).

AFN Sports 7:30 a.m.-College football: ESPN College GameDay.

AFN Sports 8:30 a.m.-College football: Insigne Bowl, Iowa State vs. Miami.

AFN Sports 1 a.m.-College basketball: Tulsa at Oklahoma.

AFN Sports 11 a.m.-College basketball: Georgia at Oklahoma State.

AFN Sports 11:30 a.m.-College football: Insigne Bowl, Oregon State vs. Notre Dame at Tulsa.

AFN Sports 5 p.m.-College basketball: Tennessee at Oklahoma.

AFN Sports 7 p.m.-College basketball: Georgia at Oklahoma State.

All Times Japan and Korea Standard Time; dot indicates delayed broadcast. All listings are subject to change. Visit www.afnradio.com for more information.

Pro baseball

Remaining free agents

NEW YORK — The 105 remaining free agents are categorized by arbitration and non-arbitration with former team through Jan. 8.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

ANAHIM (2) — Shane Hater, 3b; Aaron Sele, 1b.

BALTIMORE (4) — Marty Cordova, dh; Doug Glafkos, 3b; Budly Geronzi, 1b; David Segal, dh.

BOSTON (2) — Terry Adams, 1b; Pedro Astacio, 1b; Ellis Burks, dh; Ricky Gutierrez, 1b; Carlos Lirio, 1b; Ramiro Mendez, 1b; Dave McCarty, 1b; Ramiro Mendez, 1b.

CHICAGO (2) — Roberto Alomar, 2b; Magglio Ordonez, 1b.

CLEVELAND (3) — Rick White, 1b; Tony Oliva, 1b; Alan Lesh, 1b.

KANSAS CITY (2) — Juan Gonzalez, 2b; Deyi Reese, 1b.

NEW YORK (3) — Miguel Cairo, 2b; Tony Oliva, 1b; Luis Lee, 1b; Esteban Loaiza, 1b; C.J. Nix, 1b; John Olerud, 1b; J. J. Putz, 1b; Eric Soderstrom, 1b.

OAKLAND (2) — Chris Hammond, 1b; Jim Thome, 1b; Mark Whitten, 1b.

SEATTLE (3) — Edgar Martinez, dh; **ST. LOUIS** (4) — Brock Berke, 1b; Rino Santoro, 1b; Todd Ritchie, 1b; Tony Oliva, 1b.

TEXAS (4) — Andy Cox, Brad Fullmer, dh; Rusty Greer, dh; Brian Jordan, dh; Jeff Nelson, 1b; Herbert Perry, 1b; Jay Powell, 1b; Jeff Zimmerman, 1b.

TORONTO (2) — Dave Berg, 1b; Valerio De Los Santos, 1b; Carlos Delgado, 1b; Pat Hentgen, 1b; Gregg Zaun, 1b.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA (4) — Carlos Baerga, 1b; Danny Bautista, 1b; Mike Fitzgerald, 1b; Steve Garvey, 1b; Scott Service, 1b; Steve Sparks, 1b.

ATLANTA (2) — A-Jaret Wright, 1b; **BOSTON** (2) — Moises Alou, 1b; Paul Bako, 1b; Tom Gooden, 1b; Ben Greive, 1b; Mark Lue, 1b; Paul Hollendorn, 1b; Ramon Martinez, 1b.

CHICAGO (4) — Darren Barger, 1b; Gary Buxton, 1b; Todd Van Poppel, 1b; Barry Larkin, 1b.

COLORADO (3) — Jeremy Burrell, 1b; **CLEVELAND** (3) — Ben Sheets, 1b; **DETROIT** (3) — Chad Fox, 1b; Josias Manzanera, 1b; Jose Manuel Valdes, 1b.

FLORIDA (2) — Carlos Beltran, 1b; Dan Miceli, 1b; Darren Oliver, 1b.

INDIANAPOLIS (2) — Andy Desjardis, 1b; Todd Hundley, 1b; Brent May, 1b; Mike Hargrove, 1b; Chris Lyle, 1b; Paul Shirley, 1b; Remy Ventura, 1b.

MONTREAL (2) — Tim Lincecum, 1b; **NEW YORK** (4) — Ricky Bottalico, 1b; John Flaherty, 1b; Mike Vukobratovic, 1b; **PHILADELPHIA** (4) — Doug Glavinas, 1b; Roberto Hernandez, 1b; Kevin Mulvaney, 1b; Eric Milton, 1b.

PITTSBURGH (2) — Brian Boucher, 1b; **ST. LOUIS** (3) — Ray Lankford, 1b; **SAN DIEGO** (2) — Andy Ashby, 1b; Rich Aurilia, 1b; Robert Fick, 1b; Alan Gonzalez, 1b; **SAN FRANCISCO** (2) — Dave Burba, 1b; Robb Nen, 1b.

Free-agent signings

NEW YORK — The 102 free agents who have signed with name, position, former team and salary. For more information was obtained by The Associated Press from players' agents and team sources:

AMERICAN LEAGUE

ANAHIM (4) — Signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million.

BALTIMORE (4) — Signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million.

BOSTON (4) — Signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million; signed Steve Finley, of, Los Angeles \$1.4 million.

BALTIMORE (3) — Re-signed R.J. Surhoff, of, to a \$1.1 million, one-year contract; signed R.J. Surhoff, of, to a \$1.1 million, one-year contract; signed R.J. Surhoff, of, to a \$1.1 million, one-year contract.

BOSTON (3) — Re-signed Doug Mirebelle, c, to a \$3 million, two-year contract; signed Doug Mirebelle, c, to a \$3 million, two-year contract; signed Doug Mirebelle, c, to a \$3 million, two-year contract.

CHICAGO (3) — Signed Dustin Hermanson, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Dustin Hermanson, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Dustin Hermanson, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

CLEVELAND (3) — Signed Jose Hernandez, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract; signed Jose Hernandez, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract; signed Jose Hernandez, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, one-year contract.

DETROIT (3) — Signed Troy Percival, 1b, to a \$1.2 million, one-year contract; signed Troy Percival, 1b, to a \$1.2 million, one-year contract; signed Troy Percival, 1b, to a \$1.2 million, one-year contract.

KANSAS CITY (3) — Re-signed Kevin Applegate, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Kevin Applegate, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Kevin Applegate, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

MINNESOTA (3) — Signed Jim Castro, 3b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Jim Castro, 3b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Jim Castro, 3b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

NEW YORK (3) — Signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA (3) — Signed Brad Radke, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract; signed Brad Radke, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract; signed Brad Radke, 1b, to a \$1.8 million, two-year contract.

PITTSBURGH (3) — Signed Ray Cavillo, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Ray Cavillo, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Ray Cavillo, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

ST. LOUIS (3) — Re-signed Dan Wilson, c, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Dan Wilson, c, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Dan Wilson, c, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

TEXAS (3) — Re-signed Doug Broccoli, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Doug Broccoli, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Doug Broccoli, 1b, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

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SAN FRANCISCO (3) — Signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract; signed Mike Redmond, c, Florida, to a \$1.5 million, one-year contract.

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Expos are gone, and soon to be forgotten

After 36 years, team's presence reduced to vast empty spaces

BY SEAN FARRELL

For The Associated Press

MONTREAL — The artificial turf is gone, leaving a concrete floor at barren Olympic Stadium and an even harder truth in Montreal: The Expos are long gone.

Since the end of the season, Claude Delorme, the Expos' executive vice president for business affairs, has overseen the winding up of the team's operations.

"There's no doubt that we prolonged our life," Delorme said. "We were able to extend ourselves a few extra years that people didn't think we would."

Delorme's unenviable new role began in earnest on Sept. 29 when team president Tony Tavares confirmed the franchise's long-anticipated move to Washington, D.C., for 2005. The Expos played their final game at Olympic Stadium that evening, an anticlimactic 9-1 loss to Florida.

Now, the protective screen behind home plate is rolled up, though it remains suspended from the stadium's distant middle deck. The yellow seat that marked Willie Stargell's mammoth 535-foot homer off Wayne Twitchell on May 20, 1978, has gone to the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Back in the team's offices, a nondescript black binder sits on a shelf behind Delorme. He began putting it together three years ago and said it proved an invaluable resource in winding up the team's operations in Montreal.

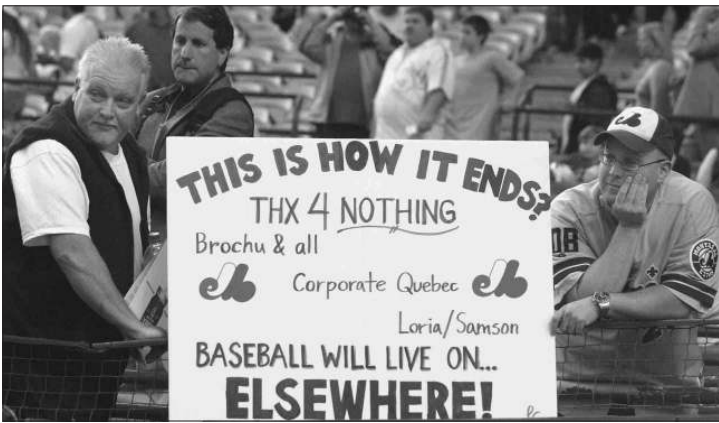
"It's basically a to-do list," Delorme said. "There were pages for every department and every individual. From disposal of the office furniture to ensuring that the alarm and telephone systems were canceled, it addressed the nuts and bolts of our operations."

The worst part of the job for Delorme was whittling down the staff. No one was surprised by the move, though the shock was significant after years of rumors.

"The human factor was definitely by far the biggest issue I had to deal with," Delorme said. "I really thought that we were all prepared mentally for this, but when it happened it was a lot more severe than we probably all anticipated. It was a family setting here and it was very emotional."

The Expos' remaining skeleton staff is down to 10 people. This Wednesday, the club set up card tables for a farewell lunch as several more long-serving employees worked their final day.

"I don't think I've had the opportunity to really reflect and say, 'Wow, this is finished. It's time to turn the page,'" Delorme said. "It's probably going to happen in



Some fans show their feelings before the Montreal Expos' final home game last Sept. 29. The Expos will move to Washington, D.C. next season.

the next two weeks, during the Christmas holidays."

Media relations and services director Monique Giroux finished up work in her empty office Wednesday after sending out the Expos' last official press release, which indicated how the team's artifacts were being distributed among various caretaker institutions.

An original employee who joined the expansion franchise in November 1968, Giroux was in good spirits despite the bleak environment.

"It's just like any other thing, it's the end of an era — thank you, goodbye," Giroux said, breaking into resigned laughter. "I don't have any hard feelings. It's been a

great ride. The only thing I regret is that we didn't have the downtown stadium. That would have been a big asset for the city."

Condominiums are under construction on the site just south of the Bell Centre, where the failed stadium project would have been built.

The only championship in the Expos' 36-year history was the 1981 NL East title, when Montreal won a playoff against Philadelphia after finishing first in the division during the second half of the strike-shortened season.

The team's mascot, a fuzzy orange Muppet-inspired character named Youpi!, will remain in Quebec with his trademark exclamation point on his back. Enor-

mously popular with children, Youpi! nonetheless will be stripped of the team's logos, which will remain property of the franchise once his rights are transferred.

For the time being, Youpi! and Dodgers closer Eric Gagne, a Montreal native who grew up within blocks of the stadium, likely will remain the biggest links between baseball and the city that allowed Jackie Robinson to break the game's color barrier with the minor league Royals in 1946.

While she doesn't see baseball returning to Montreal any time soon, Giroux wouldn't rule out the possibility much farther down the road.

"It's a big market," Giroux said. "You never know."

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"It's a big market," Giroux said. "You never know."



First baseman Brad Wilkerson signs autographs before the Montreal Expos' final home game against the Florida Marlins last Sept. 29. Canada's first major professional team has been relocated to Washington, D.C.

"It's just like any other thing, it's the end of an era — thank you, goodbye. I don't have any hard feelings. It's been a great ride. The only thing I regret is we didn't have the downtown stadium. That would have been a big asset for the city."

Monique Giroux
Former media director

Heisman winner Leinart also AP's player of the year

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Matt Leinart found a comfort zone this season.

No longer worried about losing his job, the easygoing Southern California quarterback became the unquestioned leader of the Trojans. He performed the job so well in his second year as a starter that he also became The Associated Press player of the year.

"A year of experience opens up so much," the Heisman Trophy winner said.

"You've been around. You're a veteran. You've been playing for a year. You can get so much better in a year or so."

Leinart has completed 66 percent of his passes for 2,990 yards and 28 touchdowns, guiding the top-ranked Trojans to an Orange Bowl matchup with No. 2 Oklahoma and last year's AP player of the year, Jason White.

The BCS national title game will be college football's first matchup of players with Heisman trophies. White took home last year's Heisman.

The AP player of the year voting was closer than this season's Heisman balloting, but the final order was similar. Leinart received 17 votes from a nationwide panel of 64 media members.

White and his freshman teammate, Adrian Peterson, tied for second with 12 votes each.

USC tailback Reggie Bush was fourth with 11 votes and Utah quarterback Alex Smith had nine votes. Texas tailback Cedric Benson received two votes and Louis-

AP Player of the Year voting

Player, Team	Votes
Matt Leinart, USC	17
Adrian Peterson, Oklahoma	12
Jason White, Oklahoma	12
Reggie Bush, USC	11
Alex Smith, Utah	9
Cedric Benson, Texas	2
Stefan Lefors, Louisville	2

ville quarterback Stefan Lefors got one.

In the Heisman balloting, Leinart easily beat out Peterson, who took second by a slim margin over White. Smith was fourth and Bush fifth.

Leinart is the fifth straight quarterback to win the AP award, following White, Iowa's Brad Banks, Florida's Rex Grossman and Oklahoma's Josh Heupel.

The award was established in 1956, and Texas tailback Ricky Williams was the first to win it.

Leinart became the Trojans' starting quarterback last season, taking over for departed 2002 Heisman Trophy winner Carson Palmer.

He won a four-way battle in the preseason for the job and it took him awhile to stop looking over his shoulder to see if he was about to be taken out of the game.

"This year has been more fun because I haven't felt as much pressure," the junior said.

Playing with two NFL-caliber wideouts and behind one of the best lines in the country, Leinart passed for 3,556 yards and 38 touchdowns and led USC to a share of the national title in 2003.

This year, with receivers Mike Williams and Keary Colbert gone and the line retooled, Leinart was

key in pulling together the new pieces and helping the Trojans go 12-0.

"I knew going in that I was going to have to take on a different perspective," Leinart said.

And he did so without any prompting from coach Pete Carroll or offensive coordinator Norm Chow.

"I took it upon myself just to be the leader," he said. "I really didn't have to change anything, just to carry the guys along until they got comfortable."

"I'm not a real vocal guy, but I can be," he said.

The left-hander's laid-back leadership has set the tone for the Trojans. His poise and patience were invaluable in come-from-behind road victories over Virginia Tech, Stanford and Oregon State. He threw for 761 yards with six touchdowns and one interception in those games.

Leinart's consistency has been remarkable. The Trojans are 24-1 with him as a starter and have won 21 straight, heading into the BCS national title game.

Leinart has thrown at least two touchdowns passes 10 times this season and 22 times in his career. USC's last game, a 29-24 victory over UCLA, was the first of his career without a touchdown pass.

Leinart said he intends to return to USC for his senior year, but it's looking like he's a lock to be a high first-round NFL draft pick. He could even match Palmer again and go first overall.

"I'm aware of the opportunity," Leinart said. "We'll see what happens."



Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart has completed 66 percent of his passes for 2,990 yards and 28 touchdowns, guiding the top-ranked Trojans to an Orange Bowl matchup with No. 2 Oklahoma.

AP voters select Auburn's Tuberville as college football coach of the year

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tommy Tuberville followed the most difficult season of his coaching career with the best.

A year after he was nearly replaced by Auburn, Tuberville is The Associated Press coach of the year.

"I learned a lot last year from what we went through at the end of the season," he said. "I've been more relaxed this season."

In his sixth season at Auburn, Tuberville has led the third-ranked Tigers to a 12-0 regular season and its first Southeastern Conference championship in 15 years.

"It's probably been my easiest season as a head coach because of the great senior leadership this team has," Tuberville said.

"Coaches tend to think the world is on their shoulders. I've delegated more authority this season than before. Because of that I think it's been an easier year."

But not quite perfect, despite the perfect record.

The Tigers failed to reach the Orange Bowl to play for the Bowl Championship Series national title. Auburn never could get past Oklahoma and Southern California in the BCS standings and will play Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 3.

Tuberville did far better in the coach of the year voting than his team did in the polls. He was a runaway winner, getting 35 of the 63 votes from the panel of media members.

Utah coach Urban Meyer was second with 14 votes. Meyer led the Utes to an unbeaten season and a berth in the BCS before taking the Florida job.

USC's Pete Carroll and Iowa's Kirk Ferentz received four votes, California's Jeff Tedford got three votes and Texas-El Paso's Mike Price got two. Oklahoma's Bob Stoops and Louisville's Bobby Petrino each received one vote.

Tuberville is the second straight SEC coach to win the AP award. LSU's Nick Saban was last year's winner.

AP Coach of the Year voting

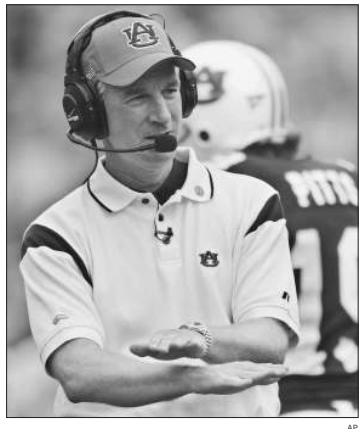
Coach, Team	Votes
Tommy Tuberville, Auburn	35
Urban Meyer, Utah	14
Pete Carroll, USC	4
Kirk Ferentz, Iowa	4
Jeff Tedford, California	3
Mike Price, UT-EP	2
Bobby Petrino, Louisville	1
Bob Stoops, Oklahoma	1

As disappointing as being left out of the title game has been for Tuberville and his undefeated Tigers, this season has been far more enjoyable than last.

The Tigers began the 2003 campaign ranked in the top 10 and favored to win the SEC. But they lost their first two games of the season and stumbled to a disappointing 8-5 finish. There was speculation late in the season Tuberville might be on the way out.

It almost happened. It became public that Auburn officials, including the university president, had covertly courted Louisville coach Bobby Petrino to replace Tuberville.

"A little bizarre is an understatement," Tuberville said.



A year after almost losing his job, Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville guided the Tigers (12-0) to a Sugar Bowl matchup with Virginia Tech.

Tulsa men's hoop coach Phillips resigns

The Associated Press

TULSA, Okla. — John Phillips resigned Saturday as Tulsa's basketball coach after opening 2-5.

Phillips led Tulsa to the NCAA tournament in his first two seasons, but the Golden Hurricane slipped to 9-20 last year and have lost four of their past five games this season.

"The last couple of months have been very difficult for me, my family and the players," Phillips said in a statement.

"Sometimes, change can bring about growth. My hope is that all TU fans will support the players through the remainder of the season and we will all witness tremendous progress."

Assistant coach Alvin Williamson will take over on an interim basis. The school offered Phillips a chance to stay on as assistant athletic director.

"Obviously, this is not the way that I envisioned becoming a head coach," said Williamson, who also played at Tulsa. "Coach Phillips has been very influential in my coaching career. As coaches, we're going to put our entire focus into this basketball team and our next opponent."

Phillips was hired in April 2001, inheriting a strong program built up by former coaches Tubby Smith, Bill Self and Buzz Peterson. Tulsa went to the NCAA tournament six times in eight years before Phillips took over.

Golden Hurricane opened this season with a loss to Wright State, then were blown out by cross-town rival Oral Roberts. The final straw was a 91-85 loss Wednesday to Loyola — a team that hadn't won a road game in more than a year.

Williamson, 31, is in his fourth season on the Tulsa coaching staff after previous stints as an assistant at Tulane, Illinois State and Washington State.

LSU's Saban agrees to coach Dolphins

Five-year contract worth nearly \$25 million has not yet been signed

By MARK LONG

The Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — LSU coach Nick Saban finally turned pro Saturday, prompting a Christmas night celebration at the home of Miami Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga.

"My wife and I high-fived each other," Huizenga said.

The billionaire businessman anxiously watched from Fort Lauderdale as Saban held a televised news conference in Orlando to announce he would accept an offer to coach the Dolphins.

Saban, courted repeatedly by the NFL in recent years, mullied over the offer for three days before disclosing his decision shortly after the Tigers arrived in Orlando for their Jan. 1 bowl game against Iowa.

"It's a tremendous challenge for me," he said, "and a great opportunity for me and my family."

No contract has been signed, but Saban agreed to a five-year deal worth almost \$5 million per year.

He first interviewed for the job last week at his home in Baton Rouge, La., hosting Huizenga and president Eddie Jones for dinner. "If somebody held a gun to my head 10 minutes ago, I couldn't tell you," Huizenga said moments after Saban's announcement. "I had a good feeling, but I really didn't know."

Saban, 53, will coach LSU in the bowl game before taking over a long-pride franchise enduring its worst season since the 1960s.

He becomes the sixth coach in team history, and the fourth since Huizenga took over as owner in 1994.

Touted as NFL material even when he was at Michigan State in the late 1990s, Saban has turned down previous overtures from at



Nick Saban, who announced on Saturday that he will take over a Dolphins team coming off its worst season since the 1960s, will coach LSU against the pros in the Capital One Bowl on Jan. 1 in Orlando, Fla.

least five top teams, including Atlanta and Chicago a year ago. He has been considered the favorite to become the Dolphins' coach since Dave Wannstedt resigned last month when they were 1-8.

Upon arriving in Orlando, Saban met with his players to inform them he was leaving. Accompanied by four uniformed Louisiana police officers, he then walked through a nearly deserted hotel lobby to a huge ballroom, where he spoke to about a dozen reporters and cameramen.

He said the Dolphins' job carried special appeal even though they're one of the NFL's worst teams at 3-11.

"I have a lot of respect and gratitude for everybody who has been

interested in me through the years," Saban said. "I just felt like this opportunity, with this organization, was one of the best that's ever been presented to me in terms of how you can control your destiny in the organization, the commitment the organization has to winning and the tradition that they have in winning."

Huizenga's willingness to give Saban full authority over the football operation could mean the demotion or departure of general manager Rick Spielman.

Saban is 9-2 this season and 48-15 in five years at LSU, taking his team to the bowl game every season.

"It's the most self-gratifying experience I've had as a coach," Saban said. "But I've always been

driven by challenges — the next challenge that makes driven people want to take advantage of the next opportunity."

The highest-paid coach in college football, Saban is in the first year of an \$18.45 million, seven-year contract at LSU, but the deal has no buyout clause penalizing him for taking another job.

LSU went 3-8 the year before he arrived and 8-4 in his first season. A Southeastern Conference title followed in 2001, and he led the Tigers to last season's BCS national championship.

"You look around and say, 'OK, who's out there that's better than that?'" Huizenga said. "I couldn't find anybody."

The other candidates interviewed by Huizenga were former Oakland Raiders coach Art Shell and Dolphins interim coach Jim Bates. Many Miami players lobbied for Huizenga to keep Bates, who is 2-3 since being promoted from defensive coordinator. His team plays Cleveland on Sunday night.

Bates may return to his former job next season.

"I think if we talk about it, we'll know if it works for both of us," Saban said. He and Bates were assistants together with the Browns in 1991-1993.

Also on that staff was Saban's close friend Bill Belichick, coach of the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots. They now become AFC East rivals.

Saban's other NFL experience was as an assistant coach with the Houston Oilers in 1988-89.

LSU defensive end Melvin Oliver said players recognized Saban had an opportunity he couldn't pass up.

"We're taking it in stride," Oliver said. "He's got to do what's best for him and his family. We understand fully."

Oliver also said Saban's decision not to affect the team's preparations for the bowl game. "The coach is dedicated, and this won't be a distraction," Oliver said.

Sports briefs

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Jose Lima rejoined the Kansas City Royals when he agreed to a one-year contract Saturday, hoping to provide stability and leadership to a rotation that was awful last season.

Lima, who pitched for the Royals in 2003, spent this year with Los Angeles, going 13-5 with a 4.07 ERA. He walked 34 and struck out 93 in 170 1/3 innings, then threw a shutout in the NL playoffs against St. Louis.

In 12 major league seasons, the right-hander is 84-82 with a 5.00 ERA. His best stretch came in 1998 and '99, when he went 16-8 and 21-10, respectively, for the Houston Astros.

"He's a proven guy that can give you innings and wants the

ball in big situations, so we're glad to have him," Royals General Manager Allard Baird said.

Terms of the deal were not immediately available.

Two years ago, Kansas City plucked Lima from the roster of the Newark Bears of the independent Atlantic League at midseason. His 8-3 record with a 4.91 ERA in 14 starts helped the Royals to their first winning record in a non-strike year since 1993.

But in 2004, the Royals — plagued by injuries that kept their pitching staff unsettled throughout the season — lost a team-record 104 games.

The pitching staff had only three shutouts and recorded the AL's worst ERA (5.15). Late in the season, things got so bad that left-hander Darrell May blamed his league-high 19 losses and 5.61 ERA on poor run support and ineffective relievers.

May was traded to San Diego last month, opening up a spot in a rotation that includes Jimmy Gobble, Rumeysis Hernandez, Brian Anderson and Zack Greinke.

Vanderbilt RB Doster shot to death

TAMPA, Fla. — Vanderbilt running back Kwame Doster was shot to death early Sunday when someone fired at the parked car he was in, police said.

Doster, 21, of Tampa, died at Tampa General Hospital after

being shot near the Ybor City nightlife district, police spokesman Joe Durkin said. Detectives were trying to find the killer and determine a motive.

Doster and two friends had stopped their car while "cruising around" when another car pulled up beside them, Durkin said. Several shots were fired at Doster's car, and one hit him in the chest while he was sitting behind the driver. No one else was hurt.

"I don't believe any words were exchanged," Durkin said, adding that investigators didn't know if Doster was the intended target.

Police believe three people were in the other car.

A message left for a Vanderbilt spokesman on Sunday was not immediately returned.

The junior running back ran for 437 yards and one touchdown this season for the Commodores (2-9). For his career, Doster had 1,621 yards rushing, 256 yards receiving and seven touchdowns.

Defending junior hockey champ U.S. opens with win

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Dan Fritzsche scored twice — including a tiebreaking short-handed goal — to lead the defending champion United States team to a 5-4 victory over Russia on Saturday night in the opening round of the World Junior Hockey Championship.

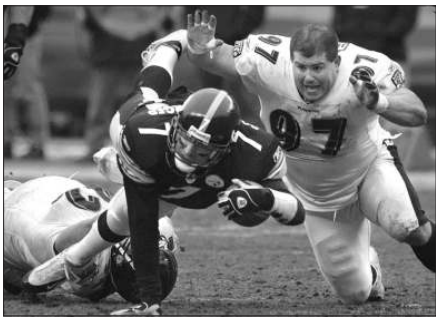
Fritzsche's second goal, scored midway through the second period, was the winner. The Americans took leads of 2-0, 3-2 and 4-3 against Russia, the tournament champion in 2002 and 2003.

Right-hander Lima rejoins Royals with one-year contract

Steelers secure bye, home-field advantage

Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) dives over Baltimore Ravens defensive tackle Maske Kemoatu, left, as he scrambles while Ravens defensive tackle Kelly Gregg, right, pursues during the second quarter on Sunday in Pittsburgh.

AP



By ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Just like their previous game, the Baltimore Ravens put a Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback out with an injury. They accomplished little else on the day the Steelers made certain they won't leave Pittsburgh until the Super Bowl if they keep winning.

Still-unbeaten Ben Roethlisberger threw two touchdown passes in a run-heavy offense before being pulled from a 20-7 victory Sunday with an unspecified rib injury caused by a blindside hit on a scoring pass.

Pittsburgh (14-1) wrapped up home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs and a first-round bye. But a team already playing without six injured regulars sustained two more injuries, as Roethlisberger and cor-

nerback Deshaun Townsend (broken right hand) left during the fourth quarter.

"We have a lot of guys hurt right now, but now we control our own destiny," wide receiver Hines Ward said. "Now teams are going to have to come in and deal with the weather, the field and our fans. You couldn't ask for a better situation."

Except to be healthier. Roethlisberger was assisted off the field, a large chunk of grass sticking out of the left side of his face mask, after being leveled by Terrell Suggs on a 2-yard touchdown pass to Jerome Tuman. Suggs was penalized for roughing the passer, but the play did not touch off any incidents.

Roethlisberger, who like many NFL quarterbacks wears a protective jacket around his ribs, returned to complete throws of 26 yards to Plaxico Burress and 9 to Jerome Bettis on Pittsburgh's next drive early in the fourth quarter. But he was replaced by Tommy Maddox midway through the drive because, coach Bill Cowher said, "He grimaced every time he threw it."

Roethlisberger's injury was the lone worrisome note for the Steelers as they ran their franchise-record winning streak to 13 games and all but eliminated the Ravens (8-7) from playoff contention.

"You don't like to lose, especially in this environment, in what pretty much is a playoff game for us," Ravens quarterback Kyle Boller said.

Roethlisberger (14-for-19, 211 yards, one interception) probably won't play Jan. 2 in Buffalo, but none of his teammates seemed overly concerned. Roethlisberger did not speak to reporters.

"Ben's a tough guy, and I'm not worried at all about Ben," Bettis said. "He wanted to keep going. He's a competitor."

Coincidentally, Roethlisberger became Pittsburgh's starter when Maddox hurt his right elbow Sept. 19 against the Ravens. Maddox did not play again until Sunday.

Bettis ran for 117 yards in his sixth 100-yard game this season — all in place of Duke Staley (hamstring), who sat out for the sixth time in eight games. Bettis also moved past Eric Dickerson into fourth place on the NFL career rushing list with 13,294 yards and closed within 60 yards of his ninth 1,000-yard season.

Pittsburgh is assured of matching the best record in franchise history (14-2 in 1978) even if it loses at Buffalo.

"They've been on a roll and it doesn't seem like they're stopping," Ravens safety Ed Reed said. "But I still think we're a better team than we displayed."

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Manning breaks Marino's season TD mark

Colts QB throws for 49th score in OT victory

BY MICHAEL MAROT

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Peyton Manning wanted the victory more than the record. He got both.

Manning rallied his Indianapolis Colts from a 15-point deficit in the final quarter, throwing his record-breaking 49th touchdown of the season to help tie the game to the last minute of regulation, and then led the winning drive in overtime as the Colts defeated San Diego 34-31 Sunday.

The victory was the eighth straight for the Colts (12-3) and gave Indianapolis at least the No. 3 seed in the playoffs. The Colts still have an outside shot at a first-round bye, but New England would have to lose its final two games.

"It's a great win for us," Manning said. "It's great to get the win and the TD record all at the same time."

San Diego's winning streak ended at eight games. The Chargers (11-4) will still host a first-round game as the No. 4 seed.

It was an atypical day for Manning and the Colts, though.

Manning, who had been sacked just nine times all season, was sacked four times by the Chargers. Manning fumbled twice, threw an interception and seemed out of sync for much of the day. He still finished 27-of-44 for 383 yards with two TDs to give him 49 this year. Miami's Dan Marino threw for 48 TDs in 1984.

When the Colts needed Manning to play his best, he did.

Manning threw a 21-yard TD pass to wide-open Brandon Stokley with 36 seconds left in regulation to break the record. Then he called a draw for Edgerrin James, who ran it in for two points to tie the score at 31.

In overtime, Manning needed just four plays to set up the winning field goal. He

hooked up with Stokley on a 23-yard gain, then found Reggie Wayne on a 35-yard catch-and-run, and James ran once to the middle of the field, setting up Mike Vanderaght's winner from 30 yards with 12:13 to go.

Manning was not the only one to break records in Indianapolis.

San Diego's LaDainian Tomlinson ran 16 yards for a touchdown on the first play of the fourth quarter, giving him 12 straight games with a rushing TD to break the NFL season record. And teammate Antonio Gates caught his 13th touchdown pass of the season, a season record for a tight end.

Every time Manning got near the end zone, flashes went off. He only wished it could have been that easy against the NFL's No. 26 pass defense.

Instead, Drew Brees and the Chargers defense made things tough.

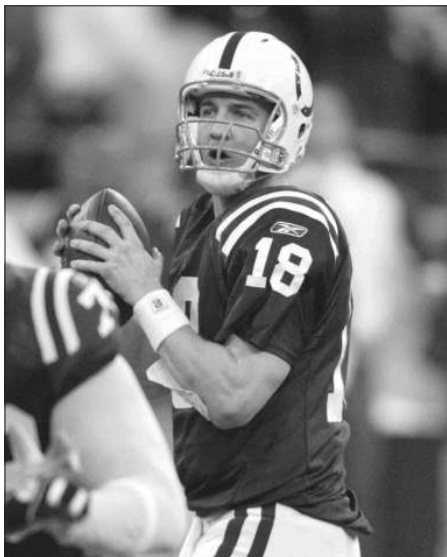
Brees finished 21-for-31 for 290 yards with three touchdowns and one interception, and San Diego led for almost the entire game.

The Chargers appeared to have control when Gates caught a shovel pass and ran four yards for a TD to make it 24-9 early in the second half.

On the Colts' next series, Harrison caught a 29-yard pass on third-and-12, giving the Colts just the fourth trio of 1,000-yard receivers. The play also set up Manning's record-tying throw, a 3-yard shovel pass to James Munro. With flash bulbs going off again, Manning clapped his hands and walked to the sidelines as fans gave him a standing ovation.

San Diego answered 11 plays later when Tomlinson scored.

Dominic Rhodes countered with an 88-yard kickoff return to cut the lead to 31-23, setting the stage for Manning's late heroics.



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning eyes receiver Brandon Stokley for his 49th touchdown pass of the season, breaking the record held by Dan Marino.

Texans' first shutout hurts Jags' playoff chances

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Maybe the Jacksonville Jaguars took Houston lightly.

The Texans certainly believed so. The scoreboard may have indicated it, too.

Dominick Davis ran for a career-high 150 yards and a touchdown and Houston crippled Jacksonville's postseason chances with a 21-0 victory Sunday.

"I knew we had a good chance coming in here, but for some reason these guys don't respect us and we came out and played like it," Texans defensive tackle Seth Payne said after Houston held the Jaguars to a franchise-low 126 yards.

The Jaguars, coming off a big win at Green Bay, looked nothing like a team with so much to gain.

The offense had some excuses. Running back Fred Taylor missed the game with a sprained left knee, ending his streak of consecutive starts at 46 games, and quarterback Byron Leftwich sustained a mild concussion in the first quarter.

The shutout was the first in team history for Houston and



marked the first time the Jaguars have been blanked since a 44-0 drubbing at Detroit on Dec. 17, 1995.

This one could be far more costly than that loss to the Lions in Jacksonville's inaugural season.

Because Baltimore lost at Pittsburgh, the Jaguars (8-7) could have taken control of the final AFC wild-card spot with a victory against Houston (7-8). Instead, they will need to win next week at Oakland and have other teams lose to return to the postseason for the first time since 1999.

"They're sitting there worried about Baltimore and Pittsburgh. They should have been worried a little bit about us," Texans defensive end Gary Walker said.

The Jags have no one to blame but themselves — because they did little on offense and couldn't stop Davis all afternoon.

"We just didn't show up," Pro Bowl defensive tackle Marcus Stroud said.

Leftwich struggled from the

start. He misfired on his first three passes and fumbled early. He picked up the loose ball and then took a shot to the head when sacked by Robaire Smith.

He missed a play before returning on the next series. But he wasn't the same. He overthrew receivers and looked lost in the pocket at times. Coach Jack Del Rio benched him with 4:04 to play, replacing him with David Garrard.

"He told me I looked kind of woozy. I couldn't do anything about it," said Leftwich, who still appeared dazed 30 minutes after the game.

Leftwich finished 6-for-14 for 35 yards with an interception.

"I was hit pretty hard, but I was able to come back," Leftwich said. "I don't know how much it affected me. It's something we're going to have to take a hard look at Monday and see if I was moving around the same."

The Texans, meanwhile, moved the ball with ease. They finished with 333 yards, much of it thanks to Davis. His previous career high was 129 yards, set last season against the New York Jets and tied last month against Tennessee.

Davis also caught five passes for 39 yards.

"You missed one tackle with that guy, and it was like he was out of the gate," Jags linebacker Mike Peterson said.

The Texans scored on the opening possession, a 65-yard drive capped by Davis' 1-yard run. They made it 14-0 in the second after Davis broke loose for a 44-yard gain and then Andre Johnson made a spinning 10-yard catch in the end zone.

They added a defensive score with 3:11 to play. Antwan Peck picked up a fumble and returned it 66 yards for his first career touchdown.

"This is the best defensive game we've had in our three-year history," coach Dom Capers said. "It shows you the kind of pride and character they have."

The Texans overcame three muffed punt returns — they recovered two of them and the Jags missed a field goal following the other — and two interceptions by David Carr to sweep the series against Jacksonville and finish 4-2 in the AFC South.

"This is a team we've had success against, and for some reason

they don't respect us," Payne said. "I hope they keep disrespecting us."

Bengals 23, Giants 22: At Cincinnati, Keivan Ratliff's 42-yard punt return set up Jon Kitna's 4-yard touchdown pass to Chad Johnson with 44 seconds left, rallying Cincinnati to a victory that amounted to another dollop of misery for the Giants.

The 64,606 bundled fans threw clumps of snow into the air while Kitna rushed to tackle Johnson in the end zone, a jubilant ending to another disappointing home season for the Bengals (7-8).

The Giants (5-10) were resigned to their eighth straight loss after Eli Manning's final pass was tipped and intercepted by Carl Powell. Several snowballs — remnants from a midweek storm — flew from the stands as the Giants trudged off the field, losers again.

The elusive win was there for the taking after Steve Christie kicked his fifth field goal for a 19-17 lead early in the fourth quarter. An injury-depleted Giants defense that had played well despite four new starters came within one play of finishing off Cincinnati.

Saints take advantage of Vick's absence

As injured star watches, Saints keep alive hopes for playoff berth

BY MARY FOSTER
The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — New Orleans got a break when the Atlanta Falcons decided to rest Michael Vick and his aching shoulder.

And the Saints took advantage with a much-needed victory.

Aaron Brooks threw for one touchdown and ran for one and Michael Lewis returned a kickoff for a score Sunday to lead the Saints to a 26-13 victory that keeps New Orleans in playoff contention.

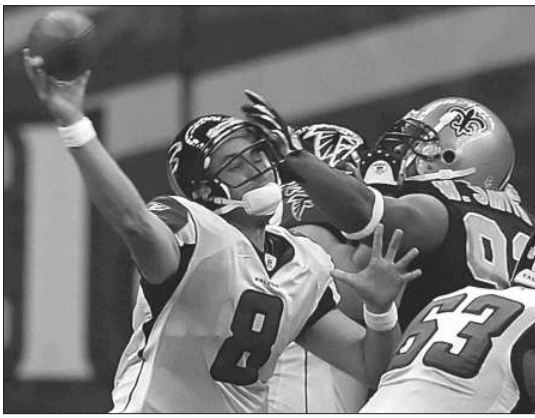
Brooks, Vick's cousin, completed 12 of 24 passes for 227 yards. With New Orleans trailing 6-5 in the second quarter, Brooks scored the go-ahead touchdown after New Orleans pulled the kicking team out of fourth down and sent the offense back in. His 1-yard leap made it 12-6 and the Saints (7-8) led thereafter.

"It was a disappointing performance for our football team, and that means everyone who got on the plane and came down here," Atlanta coach Jim Mora said.

Vick, unbeaten in three starts against New Orleans, was on the sideline in shorts and T-shirt, inactive for the game.

"I told Jim thanks after the game," Saints coach Jim Haslett joked about not facing Vick. "He's a great football player. There's a reason they pay him all that money."

"But I thought our guys were



Atlanta quarterback Matt Schaub takes a shot to the face from New Orleans' Will Smith (91) as he throws a pass in the fourth quarter of Sunday's game. Schaub subbed for regular QB Michael Vick, who was injured.

up to the challenge if Michael would have played."

It was the third straight win for New Orleans, its first three-game winning streak since 2002.

Lewis' 96-yard kickoff return with 5:32 left in the third quarter put the Saints up 26-13.

"It was even bigger because he called it at halftime," Saints center LeCharles Bentley said of Lewis' run. "He said, 'Get ready, I'm going to take one to the house.'"

The Falcons (11-4) were also without two other key offensive weapons: tight end Alge Crumpler and running back T.J. Duckett.

Vick and Crumpler had tormented the Saints in recent meetings. Vick averaged 249 yards total offense — 178 passing, 71 rushing — while passing for four touchdowns and running for four. Crumpler had 103 yards receiving including the 20-yard, game-winning touchdown in Atlanta's last victory over New Orleans last month.

The Falcons could afford to rest the trio. Atlanta already had clinched the division title, and last week wrapped up the No. 2 seed and a first-round bye.

Vick was replaced by rookie quarterback Matt Schaub, who completed 17 of 41 passes for 188 yards. He was sacked three times and had two passes intercepted.

Atlanta, which led the NFL in rushing with 169.6 yards per

game, had 93 yards against New Orleans. Warrick Dunn rushed for 52 yards on 18 carries.

Saints running back Deuce McAllister had 128 yards on 18 carries, making him the third player in franchise history to rush for 4,000 yards.

The Saints went up 2-0 on a first-quarter safety. John Carney made it 5-0 with a 22-yard field goal with 11 seconds left in the first quarter.

On the first play of the second quarter, Schaub tossed the ball to Dunn, who ran 59 yards to the New Orleans 7. Jay Feely's 25-yard field goal pulled Atlanta to 5-3. Feely's second field goal, set up by an interception, gave Atlanta a 6-5 lead.

The Saints then staged an 80-yard drive with Brooks and Joe Horn connecting for 58 yards. The drive appeared to have stalled on the 1 and the New Orleans kicking team came on. But as it was lining up, Haslett called a timeout. As he talked to the coaches on the sideline, Brooks, Horn, McAllister and Bentley huddled with them.

Seconds later, Haslett called the kicking team off the field and sent the offense back out.

"Well, I wanted the lead with 3:20 to go and the players wanted to go for it, then the fans wanted to go," Haslett said. "So I guess I was outnumbered."

Brooks leaped over center for the TD, giving New Orleans a 12-6 halftime edge.

The Saints stretched it to 19-6 on the first series of the second half on Brooks' 39-yard touchdown pass to Dante Stallworth.

Dunn had his first big run of the game, a 16-yarder for a TD late in the third quarter, to pull Atlanta within 19-13.

In another stunner, Lions win this one

BY LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

DETROIT — The Detroit Lions walked off the field stunned for a second straight week.

This time, they were surprised they won. Chad Hutchinson appeared to throw a 43-yard, game-tying touchdown pass to Bernard Berrian with 1:26 left, but an incomplete ruling on the field stood after a review despite replays that appeared to show it should've been overturned, giving Detroit a 19-13 victory over the Chicago Bears on Sunday.

"I was shocked," said Detroit's Jason Hanson, who made four field goals. "I thought for sure they were going to call it a touchdown, but I'm not going to complain." Referee Terry McAulay announced on the field that the ball was moving when Berrian hit the ground.

The Bears were flabbergasted.

"I caught the ball, got two feet in, hit the ground and that was it," Berrian said. "It was a touchdown. There's no doubt about it."

Last week, a botched extra-point kick with 8 seconds left allowed Minnesota to beat Detroit 28-27.

The Lions (6-9) had lost seven of eight,

but were subdued after nearly blowing a 16-0 lead in the second half.

"Our room was quiet for a win. I didn't see any jumping around," Detroit coach Steve Mariucci said. "A win is a win, and you shouldn't look down your nose at it, but I'm happy that we weren't elated."

"We're disappointed in our second-half performance. We had a chance to put the game away and we didn't do it." The Bears (5-10) had dropped five of six.

Kevin Jones went over the 1,000-yard mark, something only Barry Sanders and Billy Sims did as Detroit rookies, with 123 yards rushing on 25 carries.

"It's a great honor because those are two of the best ever," Jones said.

Jones, who has 1,061 yards, scored on a 1-yard run and went over the 100-yard mark for the fourth time. Sanders ran for 1,470 yards in 1989 and Sims had 1,303 yards rushing in 1980.

Detroit scored on four straight drives in the first half, building a 16-0 lead on Jones' TD and Hanson's three field goals.

Linebacker Lance Briggs pulled the Bears to 16-6 late in the second quarter with an interception and 38-yard return. Hanson kicked his fourth field goal early in the fourth quarter after Jones' fumble was overturned by replay.

Hutchinson capped a 90-yard drive with a 15-yard TD pass to Jason McKie to make it 19-13 with 7:04 to go.

The Bears got the ball back and, after converting a fourth-and-3 at midfield, Hutchinson seemed to connect with Berrian for a TD. It appeared that Berrian caught the ball and got both feet in bounds on the side of the end zone, but the officials didn't see it that way and after three more incomplete passes, Detroit escaped.

"I thought it might've been a touchdown like you did," Mariucci said.

The Lions beat a team twice in a season for the first time since 1998 and Chicago missed a chance to win at least one game against every team in the division for the first time since 1991.

Joey Harrington was 15-for-30 for 166 yards with an interception for Detroit.

Hutchinson was 20-for-35 for 114 yards with a TD and Thomas Jones ran for 109 yards.

Kevin Jones' 39-yard run set up the first score, Hanson's 31-yard field goal late in the first quarter.

When Jones surpassed the 1,000-yard mark on Detroit's next drive, he obviously knew it because he threw the football to the sideline before the crowd was told he reached the milestone. Two plays later, Jones dove for a 1-yard TD.



Despite evidence to the contrary, this apparent TD reception by Chicago's Bernard Berrian was ruled incomplete even after officials reviewed the play on video.

SPORTS



Five players in double figures lead Knicks past Bobcats, Page 32

Defensive great White dies at 43

Cause of death uncertain for former NFL sack leader

BY PAUL NOWELL
The Associated Press

CORNELIUS, N.C. — Reggie White, a fearsome defensive end for the Philadelphia Eagles and Green Bay Packers who was one of the great players in NFL history, died Sunday, his wife said. He was 43.

The cause of death was not immediately known.

"Today our beloved husband, father and friend passed away," White's wife, Sara, said in a statement through a family pastor. "His family appreciates your thoughts and prayers as we mourn the loss of Reggie White. We want to thank you in advance for honoring our privacy."

White was taken to Presbyterian Hospital, but the hospital said it would release no further information because it has not received family permission. A police officer was outside White's Tudor-style home in a gated community, and would not let a reporter approach the house.

A two-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year and ordained minister who was known as the "Minister of Defense," White played 15 years with Philadelphia, Green Bay and Carolina. He retired after the 2000 season as the NFL's career leader in sacks with 198. The mark has since been passed by Bruce Smith.

"Reggie White was a gentle warrior who will be remembered as one of the greatest defensive players in NFL history," NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue said. "Equally as impressive as his achievements on the field was the positive impact he made off the field and the way he served as



MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/AP

Former Green Bay Packers defensive end Reggie White shows his intensity in this 1997 file photo. White, 43, died Sunday of a heart attack at his home in Huntersville, N.C., his wife Sara said. White was a two-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year during his 15 years in the league.

a positive influence on so many young people."

A member of the NFL's 75th anniversary team, White was elected to the Pro Bowl a record 13 straight times from 1986-98. He was the NFL's Defensive Player of the Year in 1987 and 1998.

"He was just a wonderful play-

er, first of all," said Seattle coach Mike Holmgren, who coached White at Green Bay. "Then as a person, he was just the best. He was one of the leaders, along with Brett Favre, of our football team in Green Bay. I'm a better person for having been around Reggie White."

After an All-American senior season at Tennessee, White began his pro career with the Memphis Showboats of the USFL in 1984. He joined the Philadelphia Eagles, who held his NFL rights, after the USFL folded in 1985. For eight years he was as an integral piece in Philadelphia's

"Gang Green Defense."

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie called White "one of the greatest men ever to play the game of football" and said his "legacy on and off the football field will never be forgotten."

SEE WHITE ON PAGE 36

Steelers earn first-round bye, all but eliminate Ravens from playoff picture

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LSU's Saban makes leap to NFL, accepting five-year deal to coach Dolphins

Page 35



Colts quarterback Manning breaks Marino's record with 49th TD pass this season

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